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LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Human Resource Development in the Federal Government

19951122 060

A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

THE CHAIRMAN

U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD
1120 Vermont Avenue, N W.
Washington, D C 20419

July 1995

The President
President of the Senate
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Sirs:

In accordance with the requirements of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, it is an honor to submit this Merit Systems Protection Board report titled "Leadership for Change: Human Resource Development in the Federal Government."

This report looks at an issue facing many Government organizations as they attempt to restructure themselves and accomplish their missions more efficiently. In many cases real change cannot occur without preparing members of the Federal workforce to work in new ways, but at the same time the funds that are available for training are severely limited.

The report suggests that at least part of the solution to this problem is to change the way most organizations allocate their resources for training. Instead of predetermining a budget for training, organizations should devote more attention to evaluating how well they are functioning and then allocate training funds where they will do the most good.

I believe you will find that this report extremely useful given the interest of both the administration and Congress in reducing the size of the Government while improving the delivery of services.

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Respectfully,

Ben L. Erdreich

The Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution 1787-1987

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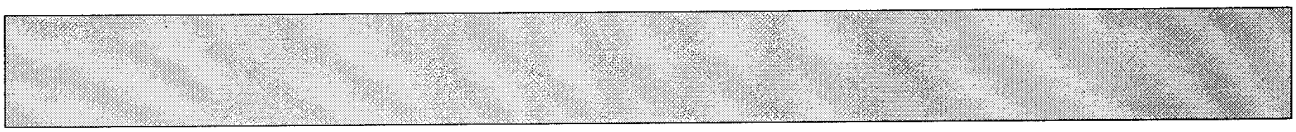


Executive Summary

The next decade promises to be a time of great change for Federal workers. The reinvention of Government means that the ways of doing business will have to change dramatically in many organizations. Missions will change and organizations will be expected to streamline their operations. In order to provide the services that will be expected from them, organizations will need workforces that are prepared to make these changes. Moreover, since one of the changes that can also be expected is a downsizing of the Federal workforce, members of the workforce who remain will have to learn to work in new ways. Accomplishment of these sorts of changes rests on training and retraining current employees. The primary issue addressed in this report is whether the systems and processes for supporting human resource development (HRD) in the Federal Government are prepared to handle the daunting task ahead.

As discussed in this report, there are a number of problems with the way HRD is practiced in many Federal organizations. People are sent to training for a variety of reasons and limited training dollars are not always spent wisely. Since there will also certainly be severe budget limitations in most organizations in the near future, it is critical that organizations get the most out of their training investments. Unfortunately, unless they learn to manage in new ways, many organizations may have a difficult time ensuring that their workforces are prepared to work more efficiently. To be successful in facilitating the changes that will be needed in the capabilities of Federal employees, HRD staffs will need to become integral participants in organizational strategic planning and agencies will need to make a long-term commitment to evaluating the operation of their programs.

Federal Government operations are undergoing more scrutiny today than at any time in the last 100 years. In many cases organizations are being asked to change fundamentally the way they do business. This change cannot be successfully accomplished unless Federal workers are prepared for it, and the HRD function is the mechanism through which they will receive this preparation. It is this critical function that is the subject of this study by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB or the Board). Among the Board's statutory responsibilities is the requirement to provide the President and Congress with periodic reports on the health of the Federal civil service and to review the significant actions of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The purpose of these reviews is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Federal Government by providing for a well-qualified and motivated workforce. The role played by the HRD function at this time is critical. The Board initiated this study to determine whether the system for meeting the training and development needs of Federal employees is up to the challenges it now faces.

The information reported in this study was obtained in a variety of ways. We held discussions with the people responsible for developing HRD policy for the entire Federal Government and individual agencies. We conducted a telephone survey of employees working in HRD in the field whose job it was to see that workers actually got the training they needed. We also asked agencies to answer a set of questions about the HRD activities in their subordinate organizations. Finally, we used data from a 1992 MSPB survey to find out what Federal employees thought about the training and development they were or were not getting.

Findings

More than three-quarters of the Federal workforce spent some time in training during the most recent year for which data are available. According to OPM, during fiscal year 1991 over $1.4 billion was spent in over 2 million separate incidents of training. The average amount spent per training event was $643, with each training event lasting an average of just over 3 days. About one in every six employees received training in new technologies.

Respondents to our 1992 Merit Principles Survey (MPS), for the most part (75 percent) believed that their most recent training experience was effective in improving their ability to perform their current jobs. Similarly, most employees (58 percent) said that the training they received as a Federal employee had effectively prepared them to perform their jobs well.

Despite the fact that most employees had received some type of training and most thought that the training was useful, about one-third of the MPS respondents said they needed more training to perform their jobs effectively. A similar proportion of employees (31 percent) did not believe that they had received the training they needed to keep pace as the requirements of their jobs have changed.

The one area that all of our study participants agreed was not a problem at this time was in training in basic skills. MPS respondents, HRD specialists in the field, and agency offices in charge of HRD policy all said that, except in a few isolated locations, they did not see any great need for such remedial kinds of training among Federal workers.

Employees responding to our 1992 survey cited the lack of adequate funds (45 percent) as the primary reason they did not receive the training they believed they needed. Our telephone survey produced a similar response, with 56 percent of the HRD specialists telling us that their budgets for training were not sufficient to meet the needs of their organizations. Agencies also held this opinion, with less than half of those responding to our inquiries saying that sufficient funds were available to meet their training needs.

Agencies that thought their training budgets were sufficient to meet their needs shared a common vision as to why they were successful. Training budgets were more likely to be seen as adequate

when training was not identified as a stand-alone or line item in either headquarters or field-level budgets. Training was more likely to be supported when its costs were included in program funding. In essence, programs are justified, but training is not, except as an associated cost of running a program.

In addition to inadequate training budgets, another reason employees may not receive the training they need is because many organizations do not always do a good job of identifying and prioritizing their training needs. Rather than basing their selections on a determination of need, agencies sometimes send employees to training as a reward for performance or because they can be spared from their duties.

Less than half of the respondents to our telephone survey thought that their office did a good job of assessing their organization's training needs. Only 47 percent of the HRD specialists we surveyed said that the procedures they used to identify training needs provided them with a realistic picture of their organization's current training needs. Even less, 33 percent, thought that their assessment procedures led to an accurate picture of their needs in the immediate future.

Almost half the agencies that responded to our written questions were concerned that the HRD function itself may not be up to its role in assisting managers in the task of meeting the Federal Government's training and development needs. HRD staffs in most organizations tend to be small; in many cases only one person is devoted to HRD. Unfortunately, these small staffs frequently are responsible for providing support for large numbers of employees. The limited number of people assigned to HRD results in little or no time being devoted to such critical activities as assessing needs and evaluating training. Perhaps more importantly, HRD staff members rarely assisted agency managers in strategic planning for their organizations.

Conclusions

Our study revealed that there were a number of reasons that Federal organizations in the future may have trouble ensuring that all of their training needs are met. The HRD staffs in many organizations primarily perform administrative duties and management frequently has little confidence that the funds devoted to training are wisely spent. This has profound implications for attempts to successfully restructure the Federal bureaucracy. Unless organizations change the way they do business and place a greater emphasis on effective program evaluation and strategic planning, they will have difficulty prioritizing the use of the limited resources that are likely to be available for training. And unless they include their HRD staffs in program evaluation efforts and strategic planning the transistion to an optimally efficient Government will be difficult to achieve.

Recommendations

1. Agencies and organizations throughout the Government need to commit themselves to evaluating their current performance. This effort should include a

greater emphasis on both strategic planning and continual and effective program evaluation.

2. HRD staffs need to become integral participants in their organizations' strategic planning and program evaluation processes. In many organizations this will represent a fundamental change in the way they have been doing business. For this change to occur management will need to see their HRD staffs in a new light. To encourage managers to include their HRD offices as they attempt to evaluate and improve their operations, the people working in HRD will need to market their skills to managers. Rather than focusing on getting people into courses, HRD offices need to convince management that their first concern is the business of the organization.

3. Agencies should work to ensure that their HRD staffs have the skills needed to meet the demands of the new roles discussed in this report.

4. OPM should use its position as the agency in charge of human resources management for the entire Government to make a case for improving the quality of HRD activities. This includes working to educate the administration, Congress, and agency heads about the value of training as an investment in a better performing Government. Rather than accepting the view of some organizations that training budgets are a place to save money, OPM should be making agencies aware that spending money on training can be a way of improving performance and solving organizational problems.

5. OPM should continue to lead the effort to define the proper roles for HRD specialists and facilitate their professional development. This should include the development of model career pathways, a comprehensive development program for HRD specialists, and training in the skills required to fill the new roles HRD staff members must assume.

6. OPM should continue to emphasize the importance of accurate assessments of training needs and encourage the development of formal assessment procedures that highlight both current performance problems and future changes in mission objectives.

Introduction

Background

One of the first objectives of the Clinton administration was reforming the way that the Government does business. The idea was to establish a new customer service contract with the American people; to, in effect, establish a new guarantee of effective, efficient, and responsive government.[1] Central to this proposal was a commitment to change the way the Government works. In the words of the National Performance Review (NPR), "It's time to make our government work for the people, learn to do more with less, and treat taxpayers like customers."[2]

In many ways, success in reforming the way the Government does business will depend upon using training to prepare members of the Federal workforce to work differently than they have in the past. The importance of training to this effort can be demonstrated by simply counting the number of times the word training occurs in the NPR report. The fact is, training is mentioned 140 times, and the report notes that "empowered people need new skills—to work as teams, use new computer software, interpret financial and statistical information, cooperate with and manage other people, and *adapt*."[3] Clearly, training will be a critical factor in providing members of the Federal workforce with these new skills.

Training will be crucial to the success of the NPR effort in a number of ways. Over the past decade, the pace of technological change has greatly increased and the rate of change is expected to accelerate in the future. Training and subsequent retraining to take advantage of technological changes and more efficient organizational structures will be essential if the Government is really going to provide the public with the best possible service. The need to adapt to these kinds of changes is, of course, not limited to the Federal workforce. This is a concern which is affecting society as a whole. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by the year 2000, three out of every four workers currently employed will need retraining for the new jobs of the next century.

Training is also critical to an organization when its missions change or cutbacks require the organization to do more with less. These are factors that are certain to affect the operation of many Federal agencies as the recommendations of the NPR are implemented. Even prior to the NPR effort, these types of changes were already occurring. In its 1992 survey of Federal employees, the Board found that almost half (49 percent) of the respondents indicated that the nature of their work had changed substantially over the past 3 years.[4] The NPR's likely impact is that more

[1] Report of the National Performance Review, "Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less," Washington, DC, September 1993, p. i.
[2] Ibid., p. 2.
[3] Ibid., p. 77.
[4] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, "Working for America: An Update," Washington, DC, July 1994, p. 23.

organizations and employees will experience these types of changes in the future and even more employees will need training to adjust to the new requirements of their jobs.

Training is also often needed to give employees new perspectives on the work that they perform. In order to produce high-quality work products, many Federal workers in the future will work in teams and be more concerned with satisfying their customers, the American public. For many employees this may involve dramatic reorientation of their work efforts. Training which emphasizes providing high-quality service and a commitment to lifetime learning and self-improvement may be needed to help employees break away from traditional ways of doing business.

Another unquestioned result of the NPR efforts will be a reduction in the number of people working in the Federal Government. While much of this reduction may take place by attrition, it is still quite possible that large numbers of employees will be displaced from their current jobs. Some will find jobs in other Federal organizations, but others may be forced to find work outside of the Government. Either of these possibilities can have negative consequences for the entire workforce, particularly during the transition period. Although many Government organizations may not have the funds to do so in the near future, providing training to help workers who will have to look for jobs in the private sector can improve the morale and performance of the people who remain in the workforce.

Thus, despite the fact that the Government is downsizing, the job facing the human resources development community will actually become larger, not smaller. This is particularly the case since the Federal Government has many jobs for which there are no private sector counterparts and for which no training is available outside of the Government. Adding to this picture is the fact that the Government over the last several years has been experiencing some of the lowest turnover rates in history. Low turnover plus downsizing means that little infusion of new skills can be expected through new hires from the private sector. This means that almost all of the new skills the Government will require of its employees in the future will have to be acquired through training.

Purpose of Study

Since the future will almost certainly bring a significant increase in the need for training for Federal employees, the real question is whether this need is likely to be met. The main purpose of this study was to determine whether the systems and processes currently in place for identifying and meeting critical training needs are likely to be up to this task. In essence our goal was to find out whether we can expect Federal workers to get the training they will need in a timely and cost-effective manner.

A Brief History of Training in the Federal Government

A review of the history of training in the Federal civil service indicates that World War II provided much of the impetus for the acceptance of inservice training for members of the civil service. However, until the passage of the Government Employees Training Act (GETA) in 1958, "there was no general underpinning in philosophy or method for

what all now recognize as a necessary means of marshalling human resources to get the Government's work done."[5] The importance of this act was that it institutionalized the Government's commitment to keeping its workforce prepared to operate at its greatest efficiency. It also provided the legal means for authorizing training expenditures, including the authorization for purchasing training from existing professional and educational institutions. As a result of GETA, there was a significant increase in the use of inservice training and use of nongovernmental institutions during the decade following the law's enactment.[6]

In 1967, President Johnson signed Executive Order 11348, giving the Civil Service Commission responsibility for planning, developing, coordinating, and evaluating inservice training throughout the Federal Government. The most important parts of this order were the growth of agency executive development programs and the establishment of the Federal Executive Institute to enhance career managerial competence. The commitment to this effort was such that by 1975 all departments and agencies had been instructed to include their executive development resource requirements in their budget submissions.[7]

In the years since 1975, the world of training in the Federal Government has changed in a number of ways. According to the agency HRD officials whom we interviewed as part of this study, the human resource development efforts of the Civil Service Commission and its successor, the Office of Personnel Management, have varied with the interests of different administrations. During this period, most of the responsibility for running HRD programs was delegated to agencies and their subordinate organizations. Different organizations chose to implement different approaches to identifying and meeting the training needs of their employees. As a result, training for Federal workers runs the gamut from remedial development of basic clerical and office skills to advanced programs for senior executives. Most Federal agencies have written training policies, and all operate or support some training activities for their employees. While OPM has continued to set overall policy and provide general guidance, agencies are free to develop their own plans, design their own programs, and allocate resources as they think is necessary to meet their needs.[8]

The most recent significant change in Federal training resulted from the implementation of the Government Employees Training Act of 1993. This act was signed by the President on March 31, 1994, as a provision of the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act of 1994 (also known as the Buyout Act) and includes amendments to GETA which could be implemented by agencies immediately. The amendments were designed to reduce restrictions on training to allow managers to focus on organizational mission and to take advantage of the current training marketplace. The amendments changed GETA by:

> Expanding the definition of training from that directly related to the perfor-

[5] U.S. Civil Service Commission, Office of Public Affairs, "Biography of an Ideal," Washington, DC, 1973, p. 97.
[6] Ibid., p. 110.
[7] Ibid., p. 112.
[8] Task Force Report to the National Commission on the Public Service, "Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service," Washington, DC, 1989, p. 141.

mance of the "official duties" to any training that is "mission-related";

Eliminating the distinction between "Government" and "non-Government" training to allow managers to take full advantage of available training sources;

Allowing agencies to retrain employees for placement in another Federal agency when such training is in the interest of the Government;

Allowing agencies to determine when a "continued service agreement"[9] with an employee is appropriate and to apply it to any training to protect the Government's investment; and

Changing requirements for agencies to report to OPM on training expenditures and activities from annually to at least every 3 years.

In most Federal agencies, training activities are considered to be a central management function. Management has the responsibility for identifying and providing the resources required to meet organizational training and development needs. For most organizations this begins with organizational leaders determining how much money will be spent on training and development activities. Usually they will establish budgets for training activities in organizational units, while individual supervisors are responsible for making decisions concerning who should go to training and the type of training they should attend. In some occupational fields, employees who are part of formal career development programs may be required to attend certain types of training.

People working in the human resources development function are typically responsible for assisting management in identifying training needs and getting employees into the training they need. For most Federal agencies, responsibility for HRD activities is incorporated with other human resources management responsibilities. However, a few agencies, in order to emphasize their commitment to training or to protect their training budget, have separated the training and development function from the more traditional human resources management (HRM) functions.

One reason some organizations may have made the decision to effect this separation was a lack of confidence and respect for the work performed in personnel offices across the Federal Government. In 1993, the Merit Systems Protection Board issued a report which concluded that "for a variety of reasons, some of the functions assigned to personnel offices are too often not done well or are of little relevance to line managers in their focus on mission accomplishment."[10]

The report suggested that these types of problems unfortunately were not limited to the traditional personnel functions. Concerns were also raised about the quality of training and development services provided to managers. Only 53 percent of the managers surveyed in connection with the study rated the service they received in the area of employee development as good or excellent.[11]

[9] Under the conditions of a "continued service agreement" an employee may agree to work for a specified period of time in exchange for obtaining some type of training.

[10] U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, "Federal Personnel Offices: Time for Change?," Washington, DC, August 1993, p. ix.

[11] Ibid., p. 15.

The Current State of Human Resources Development in the Federal Government

Methodology for Reviewing Federal HRD

To learn whether the Federal Government's approaches for meeting its future training and development needs are likely to be up to the task, we looked at the HRD function from a number of perspectives. It was important to do this since training and development in the Federal Government is one of the few aspects of human resources management that has largely been decentralized and delegated to organizations and managers. As a result, there is tremendous variety in the mechanisms that support the delivery of training. In fact, the variety is so great that, even though we attempted to look at this area from a number of points of view, getting a total picture proved to be extremely difficult.

There is also an enormous diversity in the types of training offered within the Government. For example, and the list is by no means exhaustive, table 1 shows over a dozen general categories of training that are typically provided in most organizations. As shown in this table, training for Federal employees ranges from new employee orientation to training in critical job skills.

In order to begin to get a handle on this expansive and daunting topic, we decided to solicit information from the people responsible for developing HRD policy at both the governmental level and the agency level as well as from those whose job it was to see that employees actually got the training they needed. We also attempted to find out what Federal employees thought about the training and

Table 1. General Types of Training in the Federal Government

New Employee Orientation	Managerial and Supervisory Training
Probationary Period Training for New Employees	Academic Degree Training
Basic Skills and Literacy Training	Training to Improve Organizational Effectiveness
Job Skills Training (also referred to as Technical/Professional Education and Training)	Training in New Technologies
Training Provided as Employee Career Development	Training in Special Emphasis Programs (e.g., preventing sexual harassment and fostering AIDS awareness)
Retraining Based on Occupational Changes	Training for Renewal
Participation in Professional Organizations	

development they were or were not getting and what, if any, problems interfered with the process. A brief description of each of our sources of information follows.

Review of OPM and Agency HRD Programs

We started by holding discussions with HRD policymakers at OPM and several of the major Federal agencies. Although we did not attempt to individually review all of the programs undertaken by the OPM organization responsible for training—the Human Resources Development Group—we did look at these programs to get a general view of the scope of the issues facing the Government in this area.

In our discussions with senior-level policymakers in HRD at several major Federal agencies we tried to find out how they attempted to meet the training and development needs in their organizations. We also solicited their views on the issues affecting HRD in their agencies and throughout the Federal Government.

Results of the 1992 Merit Principles Survey

Every 3 years the Board surveys a random sample of Federal employees working in the executive branch. In 1992 we surveyed nearly 21,000 employees and received responses from 64 percent of them.[12] In that survey we asked employees a series of questions about their training needs. In particular, we focused on their perceptions concerning what training they needed, what training they had received, and, if they had not received the training they thought they needed, why this was the case.

Results of a Telephone Survey of HRD Specialists

To find out what people working in the area of human resources development in the field were actually doing and what problems they faced, we conducted a telephone survey of a random sample of people working in HRD. Specifically, we contacted HRD specialists at 135 randomly selected locations. Of these specialists, 13 either said they were too busy to be interviewed or otherwise declined to participate. This resulted in 122 completed interviews, for a response rate of 90 percent. To ensure that we were talking to people who were knowledgeable about HRD in their organization, we asked to speak to the person who was in charge of HRD in their office at the beginning of each of the interviews. A copy of the survey interview is included as an appendix to this report.

Agency Views on Issues in HRD

We developed a set of written questions that addressed the issues that were identified in our discussions with OPM and agency HRD policymakers. We sent these questions to the heads of HRD at each of the 23 largest Federal agencies and received responses from 14 of them.

[12] See U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, "Working For America: An Update," Washington, DC, July 1994, for a full report on the results of this survey, including a copy of the survey instrument and a discussion of the methodology used.

Are Federal Employees Getting the Training They Need?

Other than for training in critical job skills in certain occupations and special emphasis training, the only training mandated for members of the Federal civilian workforce is for new supervisors and managers. This training can be obtained through OPM programs, or agencies can conduct their own inhouse programs using agency employees or outside contractors. Executive development training is also required for new employees in senior executive positions. This training is offered through OPM's executive seminar centers.

Although mandatory training covers only a small portion of the Federal workforce, the Government spends vast amounts of money each year on training and development activities. For example, OPM reports that during FY 1991 the Government spent $1.4 billion for human resource development. OPM's figure for expenditures includes personnel salary costs and other related agency costs. OPM also recorded almost 2.2 million separate instances of training for FY 1991. Training provided by agencies for their employees accounted for 60 percent of all instances and 51 percent of all expenditures for 1991, while training obtained from other agencies accounted for 11 percent of all instances and 14 percent of all expenditures. Nongovernment training, which includes training provided to Federal employees by universities, professional societies, nonprofit groups, and private sector organizations, accounted for 29 percent of all instances and 35 percent of all expenditures. The average cost per instance of training was $643 and the average length of training per instance was just over 3 days (almost 28 hours).

The data for fiscal year 1992 show that expenditures on training dropped considerably from 1991 levels, although the drop may be due more to an accounting change in 1991 than to a significant decrease in support for training. During FY 1992, agencies spent a total of $1.06 billion on training, or about 24 percent less than in the previous year. Apparently, much of this reduction was due primarily to a decrease in salaries and staff years associated with training. According to information collected by OPM, there was a 50-percent decline in instructor staff years and a 12-percent reduction in clerical support staff years. Despite the reduction in total expenditures, there was an almost 8-percent increase during 1992 in the percentage of Federal employees attending training. To some degree, this increase was offset by a 7-percent decrease in the average length of time spent in training per training instance (26 hours).

Our 1992 Merit Principles Survey showed that about 80 percent of our respondents had spent some time in training during the previous year. Their average total time spent in training that year was about 6 days. Perhaps reflecting the complexity of their jobs, professional and administrative employees were about twice as likely (22 percent) to have spent more than 2 weeks in training than were clerical or technical employees (12 percent).

Table 2 shows the most recent types of training completed by Federal employees responding to our 1992 survey categorized by type of work performed. As seen in this table, about a quarter of all employees recently received training in job-related skills, and about one in every six employees received training in new technologies. Employees working in clerical and technical jobs were somewhat more likely

Table 2. Most Recent Type of Training for 1992 MSPB Survey Respondents
(Percent of Employees Receiving Training by Type of Position)

Type of Training	All Respondents	Professional/ Administrative	Clerical/ Technical
Job Skills Training	24	23	26
New Technology	17	17	24
Attending Conferences	12	18	6
Management/Supervisory	7	10	4
Human Relations Skills	5	5	5
Communications Skills	2	2	2
Basic Skill	0.4	0. 3	1
Other Training	13	10	14

to have received training in new technologies, while professional and administrative employees were more likely to have attended conferences or received managerial or supervisory training. Regardless of their type of job, employees for the most part (75 percent) believed that their most recent training experience was effective in improving their ability to perform their current jobs. Similarly, most employees (58 percent) said that the training they received as a Federal employee had effectively prepared them to perform their jobs well.

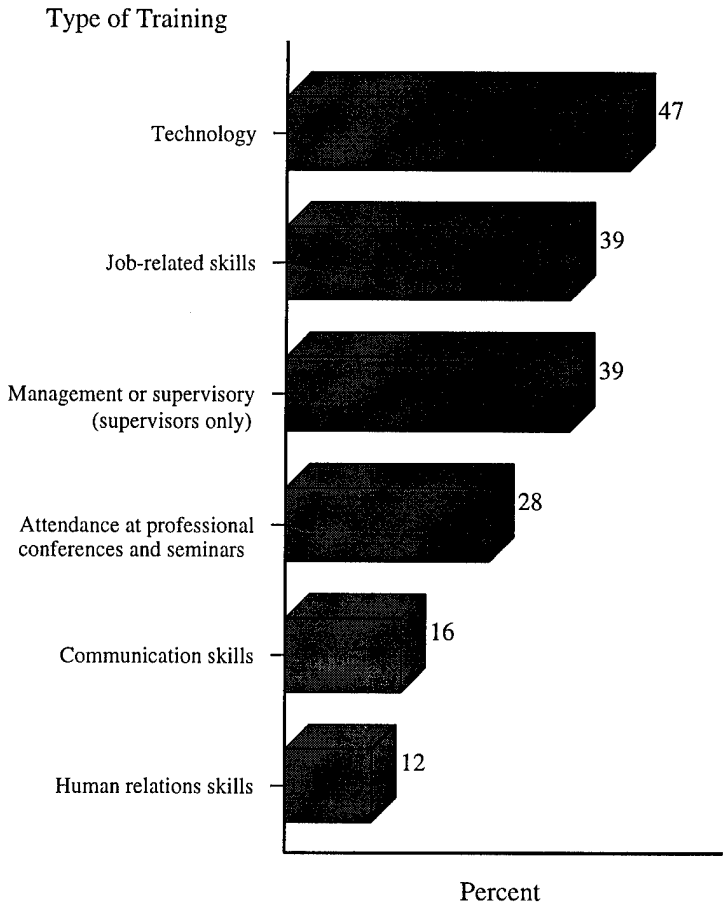
Although most employees had received some type of training and most thought the training they had received was useful, 32 percent of the respondents indicated that they needed more training to perform their jobs effectively. Likewise, 31 percent did not think that they had received the training they needed to keep pace as the requirements of their jobs have changed. Both of these responses suggest that there may be substantial training needs for Federal employees that are not being met. This surely is a concern right now, but the percentage of employees whose training needs go unmet may well increase in the future as training is needed to keep pace with changes in the way work is performed.

Another indication of this potential problem can be found in the responses of employees to the question of whether they had been trained in new technology as it was brought into their offices. Here we found that only 44 percent said they had received this type of training. Similarly, when we asked employees whether

they had received the training they had requested, only 33 percent said they had gotten all they had asked for, while 28 percent said they hadn't received any of the training they had requested.

Employee views on the types of training needed to perform their current jobs are shown in Figure 1. Of course, since the 1992 survey asked employees only about the training they needed for their current jobs, there may be an even greater problem getting employees the training that will be needed to prepare them to work in new, more efficient ways.

Figure 1. Percent of Employees Saying They Need Various Types of Training



Source: MSPB Merit Principles Survey, 1992.

Just as the Merit Principles Survey indicated that many employees did not believe that their training needs have been met, the responses we received to the questions we sent to agencies made it clear that many agencies did not believe that they were able to meet all of the training and development needs of their employees. Even more significantly, when we asked the agencies about the areas in which they were having difficultly meeting employees' training needs, half of them rated job-related training as their most critical need at this time. Other areas rated as critical were first-line supervisory training, training for managers, and adapting to new technologies.

Interestingly, the one area that all of the agencies agreed was not a problem at this time was training in basic skills. Similar findings were also provided by respondents to our Merit Principles Survey and our telephone survey of HRD personnel, with most of the latter finding no great need among Federal workers for such remedial kinds of training. This is an interesting finding since it runs somewhat counter to what had been predicted in studies such as "Civil Service 2000." According to projections made in that report, the Government's ability to provide high-quality

services in the future would increasingly depend on its ability to provide training to newly hired individuals who may not in all cases be proficient in the basic skills required in the workplace.[13] Our results, however, indicated that, except in a few isolated occupations and locations, a problem in this area has not yet occurred. Since it is quite likely that the size of the Federal workforce will not be growing in the near future and most of the vacancies that will occur are likely to require high-level skills, there is little evidence to suggest that the Federal Government will face a problem in this area in the near future.

Potential Problems in Federal HRD

The information we collected during the course of our study revealed a number of problems facing the HRD community and the Federal workforce in general. When we asked employees in our 1992 Merit Principles Survey to indicate the primary reason they did not receive the training that they believed they needed, the most frequent response was, perhaps not surprisingly, a lack of adequate funds (45 percent). This was followed by a lack of management support (20 percent), inability to get away from work because of workload pressures (14 percent), selection of coworkers for training (13 percent), and unavailability of appropriate training (8 percent).

Similar reasons were provided by each of the other information sources used in this study. In fact, when we asked the major agencies to identify the most critical challenges facing the HRD community, half mentioned a lack of adequate funding. According to one agency, this situation resulted from a "lack of priority given to training by management * * *. Management views training as a quick fix instead of part and parcel of strategic planning."

When resources are limited, it is particularly important that the funds that are available are wisely spent. From the points of view provided by our study participants, they have not always been. According to HRD specialists participating in our study, agencies tend to focus on indoctrinating and initially training new employees or on identifying and moving up the organizational elite, but provide very little training for members of the workforce who are not new or otherwise identified for development.

To some of our study participants, this failure to consider all of an organization's training needs was the result of inadequate emphasis being placed on conducting accurate assessments of training needs. Several agencies, in fact, told us that this was the greatest challenge facing HRD in their organizations. In some cases, there were no formal procedures for assessing employee training needs, while in others the methods for collecting this information were judged to be cursory and unreliable.

When accurate assessments of training needs are not available there are no good criteria for deciding which of many voiced needs should be met. In this atmosphere, people may be selected for training as a reward for prior

[13] William B. Johnston et al., "Civil Service 2000," a report prepared by the Hudson Institute for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, DC, June 1988, pp. 22, 30, and 32.

achievements or because they are more expendable to the organization.[14] To the extent that this occurs, limited training resources may be spent on some less critical training activities while more critical needs go unmet.

This can have negative consequences for members of the workforce who may come to share the belief of one telephone survey respondent who said: "The leaders of this organization place no value on employees staying current. There is no commitment to lifelong learning. Because of this lack of commitment or value to learning and education, their mindset is, if the employee is attending training he is not working. They view learning as separate from work."

Perhaps even more importantly, when assessments of needs are made, but the information is collected in a cursory fashion, the people who are responsible for making budget decisions seldom have confidence in the assessment results. As a result, they make decisions to meet the less questionable but better documented needs of other parts of the organization at the expense of training and development. Given this state of affairs, it is no wonder that most of our study participants shared the view that the budget for training is always the first to be cut. In fact, the National Academy of Public Administration found that in many Federal organizations, "Training has been regarded as a variable cost with training and retraining the existent workforce depending upon the availability of slack resources."[15]

Based on the views of our study participants, there may also be other problems that affect the extent to which Federal employees receive the training they need. Almost half the agencies that responded to our written questions were concerned that the HRD function as conducted in most organizations may not be up to the task of meeting the Federal Government's training and development needs. For example, several agencies said that they thought their organization devoted too few personnel resources to HRD. In the words of one agency HRD official, "Limited personnel results in no time to develop programs or even assess needs," while another said that "time spent on other duties interferes with planning and evaluating training." Insufficient numbers of HRD personnel was explained by yet another agency as the result of "the mistaken belief that HRD jobs are overhead positions and not essential to the overall functioning of the organization."

Beyond the issue of whether a sufficient number of personnel were assigned to the HRD function, still other agencies called into question whether some of the people working in HRD in their organization possessed the skills needed to be effective in assisting managers in meeting their employees' training and development needs. According to our respondents this was particularly true with regard to assisting managers in strategic planning and identifying future training requirements.

To try to find out what could be done to ensure that at least the most critical, if not all,

[14] Glenn M. McEvoy and Paul F. Butler, "Five Uneasy Pieces in the Training Evaluation Puzzle," Training and Development Journal, vol. 44, No. 8, August 1990, p. 40.

[15] National Academy of Public Administration, "Leading People in Change: Empowerment, Commitment, Accountability," Washington DC, April 1993, p. 13.

of the Federal Government's training needs are met, we took a closer look at each of the problem areas just discussed. Our goal was to understand how the process for meeting HRD needs in most agencies was functioning and how it could be improved.

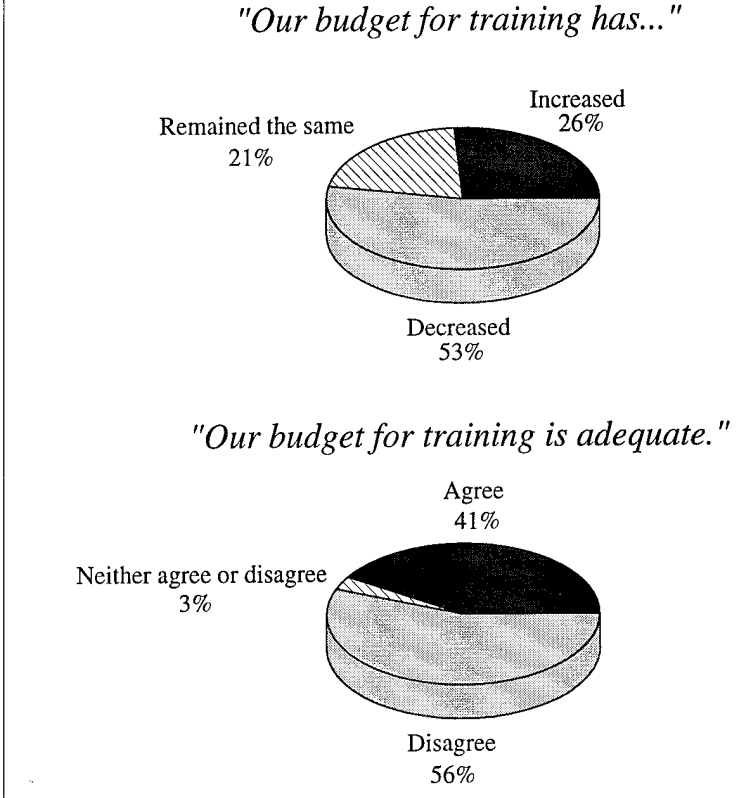
Are Budgets Sufficient to Meet Training Needs?

The people we interviewed who develop HRD policy for their agencies told us that in many of their organizations the budgets set aside for training were not nearly keeping pace with their needs. In most cases they thought that the training needs in their agencies were increasing at the same time that their training budgets were shrinking. A similar response was found among respondents to our telephone survey of agency HRD specialists. As shown in figure 2, only about a quarter (26 percent) of our respondents told us that their budgets for training had increased, while more than half (53 percent) said that their budgets had been reduced.

As figure 2 also shows, when we asked the HRD specialists whether their budgets were sufficient to meet their needs, most said that they were not (56 percent). A similar opinion was held by most of the agencies responding to our written questions. Fewer than half of the agencies responding said sufficient funds were available to meet their training needs.

When the National Commission on the Public Service, popularly known as the Volcker Commission, reviewed Government operations in the late 1980's as they affected the quality of the Federal workforce it found that many organizations' budgets for training and

Figure 2. Views of Survey Respondents on Two Questions Concerning Training Budgets



Source: MSPB telephone survey of HRD specialists, April 1994.

development were insufficient to meet the needs of their employees. In the report on its findings, the Commission concluded:

> Federal expenditures on training are absurdly low, if training is understood to be an element of investment for growth and productivity. The Federal Government spends about three-quarters of 1 percent of its payroll dollars on training. In contrast, many of the top-rated companies spend as much as 10 percent of payroll for this purpose, while the military devotes as much as 15 to 20 percent of its payroll dollars to this goal. In our interviews, Federal training directors attributed the low investment in training and development to the lack of strategic planning by agency leaders (both political and career) and to the parochial perspectives of many top careerists, who are themselves the product of narrow career paths.[16]

A similar conclusion was reached with regard to State and local governments by the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service (also called the Winter Commission), headed by former Mississippi Gov. William Winter. In discussing training and development in State and local governments, they concluded simply: "Governments operate antiquated and obsolete personnel, procurement, and budget systems. They fail to invest in the most critical resource they have: their rank and file personnel."[17]

Similarly, all of the sources included in our study shared the view that within many Federal organizations either the funds allotted for training are insufficient to meet all the needs of employees or, at the very least, the funds that are available may not be being spent wisely.

Many of our study participants were so concerned about the fact that they could not always find funds for needed training that they thought something had to be done to stabilize or even reverse the erosion of funds that their organization spent on training. At the very least they were concerned that something be done to ensure that the Government's most critical training needs would be met.

One way suggested by many of the participants in our study was for organizations to set aside a certain amount of money that is earmarked for training and cannot easily be used for other purposes. This idea was also suggested by the Winter Commission, which recommended that decisionmakers "think about Government workers as people open to new challenges, human capital to be developed" and do what progressive private firms do: "set aside at least 3 percent of payroll costs to train and retrain government employees."[18]

As figure 3 shows, when we asked HRD specialists whether they thought their organization should set aside a fixed percentage of their budget for personnel that would be earmarked exclusively for training, the over-

[16] Task Force Report to the National Commission on the Public Service, p. 143.
[17] From the report of the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service as reported in the Denver Post July 18, 1993.
[18] From the report of the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service as reported in Governing, August 1993, pp. 54-55.

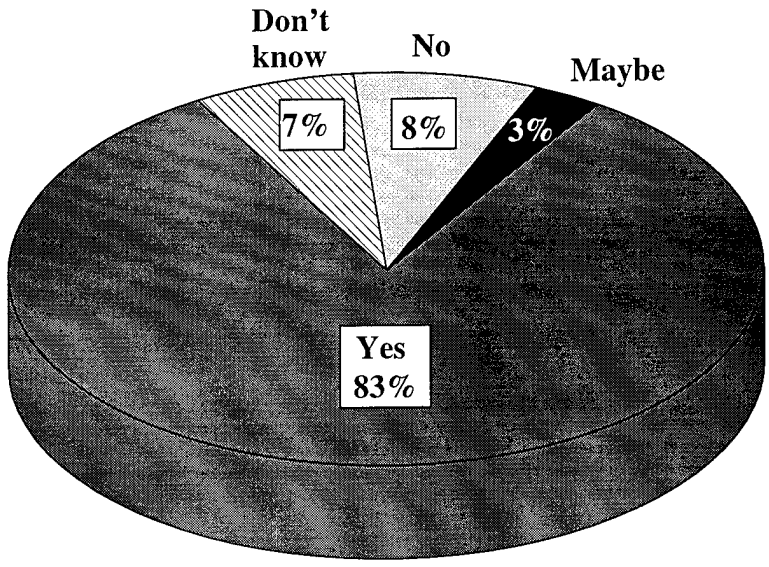
whelming majority (83 percent) said that it should. Only 8 percent said that their organization should not do this.

The responses of the persons in charge of agency HRD programs concerning the question of whether funds should be earmarked exclusively for training were not nearly so one-sided as those obtained from the HRD specialists. Although about half indicated that this would be a good idea, the other half were opposed. Among those agencies that said setting aside money for training would be a good idea, the average amount that they would recommend was about 3 to 5 percent of payroll.

In general, an agency's response to the idea of earmarking funds exclusively for training was related to whether it believed that the current budget for training was adequate. Agencies that did not view their training budgets as adequate tended to think that they would do better by setting aside a fixed percentage of their personnel budget for training. As one agency said, "A buffer is needed to prevent knee-jerk cuts." According to another agency: it is important to take drastic steps like this even though "there is always some concern that if training funds are specifically earmarked, they will become an expedient target when budgets must be reduced. However, the need to invest in people through training is so critical, the current level so limited, and the potential return to the Government so significant, that this becomes an acceptable risk."

Figure 3. Views of Survey Respondents on a Question Concerning a Fixed Budget Allocation for Employee Development

"Should a fixed percent of an organization's budget be set aside for employee development?"



Note: Totals do not add to 100 because of rounding.
Source: MSPB telephone survey of HRD specialists, April 1994.

Several other agencies were strongly opposed to the idea of a fixed training budget. For example, one agency said that "setting aside a certain percentage would not necessarily ensure the right kind of training." This concern was echoed by another agency which expressed the view that agency managers had little confidence in the results of the current needs assessment process and simply setting aside a fixed amount for training would make the whole process all the more meaningless and mindless.

An interesting twist on the idea of setting aside a fixed amount for training was proposed in an accompanying report of the National Performance Review which addressed Reinventing Human Resource Management. One of the recommended actions was to give agencies the flexibility to use savings from reinvention efforts to increase their investment in employee training and development. According to the report, "Authorizing agencies to use savings resulting from reinvention to finance employee training and development provides additional incentive for reinvention, increases the funds available to invest in employee training, and helps ensure that the federal workforce becomes more effective and productive."[19]

While this recommendation acknowledges the importance of training to any successful reinvention effort, in the short run at least, it will probably do little to secure more funds for training and development. To ensure that agencies make an effort to reinvent themselves and produce a Government that costs less, agencies will have their personnel ceilings and budgets reduced over the next several years. In effect, agencies will already be giving up their reinvention savings. Over the course of the next several years at least, it is somewhat unlikely that there will be any savings left that can be redirected to support training and development activities. The more likely result is that agencies will conform to budget reductions in anticipation of reinvention savings and that there will be even greater competition for funds within organizations. In some places this will very likely mean even less money for training and development.

Based upon our review of the HRD programs in most agencies, the objections several agencies raised about setting aside a fixed amount for training are particularly cogent in the current fiscal climate. In all probability, the near future will be one of tighter overall budgets for most of the Federal Government. If training budgets can not be defended in terms of their impact on the organization, they will eventually be raided. In our view, attempts to set aside a fixed amount for training may slow down the erosion of training budgets in some organizations, but will not ultimately ensure that Federal employees are getting the training they need to work efficiently. Perhaps as one agency suggested, a better way to ensure that training budgets are adequate is to allocate funding for human resources development that is keyed to an effective system of needs assessment and priorities and not an artificially established budget target.

[19] An Accompanying Report of the National Performance Review, "Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less—Reinventing Human Resource Management," Washington, DC, 1993, p. 45.

Conducting Accurate Assessments of Employee Needs

If setting aside a fixed budget for training is not likely to happen in many agencies and not likely to withstand attacks in times of intense competition for resources, what is the best way for organizations to get the funds they need to support employee training and development? Or, alternatively, when budgets are not sufficient to meet all of an organization's training needs, how can the organization make sure that it is making the best use of limited training dollars? Several agencies that, perhaps not coincidentally, indicated that their training budgets are adequate, generally agreed as to the best approach. In response to our written questions one agency noted. "The best way for agencies to ensure that they receive adequate training funds is to do systematic needs assessment. Training which is mission essential and relates directly to the operation of the agency will be funded." The key is, of course, providing credible documentation of training needs to decision makers.

Several of our questions to agencies and HRD specialists in the field focused on how organizations determine their training and development needs. When we asked agencies whose responsibility it is to assess their needs, we found that their responses varied as a function of the type of need. Agency headquarters typically said that they are responsible for assessment of managerial and executive-level training needs as well as for the development of career programs. The field and headquarters tend to share responsibility for assessment of needs with regard to critical occupations, new supervisory training needs, and individual training needs.

The way the process normally works is that the field staff are responsible for assessing the needs within individual organizations, while headquarters staff are responsible for prioritizing these assessments in relation to overall mission requirements. Agencies also told us that both headquarters and the field share the responsibility for determining the need for training in basic skills, although as mentioned earlier, few agencies thought that they had substantial needs for training in this area. For this reason, most agencies noted that they do not routinely assess the need for this type of training.

Our review also found a wide discrepancy in how agencies, and indeed organizations within agencies, attempt to determine their training needs. Our written questions asked agencies how they determined their training needs for each of seven categories of training. We also asked our telephone survey participants to tell us about the procedures they used to determine their needs for training. While some agencies and organizations had rigorous and sophisticated methods for assessing their training needs, others simply asked their managers what their employees needed or wanted. Still others simply looked to the training they had provided in the past and planned to provide the same training in the future if their budgets for training would support it.

Despite a wide range of approaches for delivering HRD services throughout the Government, agencies and HRD specialists in many organizations reported using a similar process to identify most of their training needs. Typically this process begins with an annual survey to supervisors. This usually takes the

form of a request that supervisors identify the training needs of the employees who work for them. Other times the training office may ask supervisors to tell them how many employees they would like to send to the courses they are offering. In many cases individual employees are responsible for determining their own needs, prioritizing them, and communicating them to their supervisors. In some cases, the performance appraisal process is used to capture this information, especially in the cases of employees who have individual development plans. Supervisors are usually responsible for compiling the training needs of all of their subordinates and prioritizing them.

Information from individual supervisors is passed up the organization, ultimately to an office that is responsible for aggregating the needs of the entire organization. In many cases, the personnel office is charged with consolidating the information from individual supervisors. The resulting list of needs is normally then given to a cost management or budget committee that can change the priorities based upon the total projected budget for training. The recommendations of this committee are then passed on to an office that is responsible for making the organization's overall training budget determinations. Once an organization's overall budget has been determined, the results are normally passed back down the chain of command and adjustments in priorities may be made based upon the projected availability of funds.

While these general procedures would seem to make sense, at least in some ways, there are many reasons the process can yield unreliable results. According to the HRD policymakers we interviewed, training is sometimes provided as a reward and people are identified as needing training for this reason. Other study participants told us that many times the bottom-up process starts with employee requests for personal development or for a training opportunity that provides a desirable way to get away from the office for a while. When presented with these requests, supervisors, who know that the final training budget will probably not allow for all of the training they have requested, may simply pass on the requests from their subordinates. Moreover, owing to budget limitations, few employees expect to get all of the training they ask for and there is, therefore, an incentive for both employees and supervisors to ask for everything they can in the hope that they will get something. This being the case, it is not surprising that many higher level officials often attach little credibility to the results of the training needs assessment process.

With regard to the training requirements that are likely to occur as a result of the National Performance Review efforts, our study participants also had concerns that the bottom-up process used to determine training needs in many organizations may not tap into changes in organizational priorities and the way work is performed. There was a general feeling among the HRD specialists and agency HRD policymakers who participated in our study that there is little or no connection between the training needs assessment process and organizational strategic planning. For this reason, even when training funds are available, the decision on who will attend training is often based upon who can be spared rather than who could benefit the most. Another reason the results of training needs surveys often carry little weight with agency management is the role played by HRD specialists in the assessment process. Although HRD employees in the field are relied upon for most of the information collected for the

assessment of training needs, these employees spend very little time on this activity. As will be discussed in more detail later, our telephone survey asked HRD specialists how much time they spent on a variety of activities. The results showed that people working in HRD spent very little of their time helping managers identify the training needs of their organization. In fact, what they told us was that less than 5 percent of their time was spent on assessing individual, organizational, and occupational training needs.

Moreover, less than half of our respondents thought that their office did a good job of assisting in the assessment of these needs. The net result was that only 47 percent of the HRD specialists we surveyed said that the process they use to identify training needs in their organizations provides them with a realistic picture of their organization's current training needs. Even less, 33 percent, thought that their assessment procedures lead to an accurate picture of their organization's needs in the immediate future.

According to the HRD policymakers we interviewed, the quality of the input and thus the results of the training needs assessment process varied greatly from organization to organization. Given these problems, it is little wonder that internally the results of these assessments often carried little weight when it came to budgeting resources. And, in many organizations we were told that the whole process was little more than a paperwork exercise.

OPM also investigated this issue and reached a similar conclusion; i.e., that training is all too often ad hoc and self-initiated, and bears little discernible relation to major agency objectives and missions. For these reasons, in 1992 OPM proposed regulations that would have required agencies to put in place comprehensive, ongoing needs assessment procedures. This initiative would have required agencies to implement policies or procedures for comprehensive needs assessments that were linked to desired levels of employee performance.[20] The purpose of these regulations was to increase the likelihood that the resources that are committed to training are directly related to agency missions and performance priorities. It was OPM's belief that valid training needs assessments serve as the most legitimate basis for determining what HRD expenditures to make.[21]

The overall goal set forth in OPM's plan to revitalize Federal training and development was to elevate HRD strategy Governmentwide and focus attention on developmental needs from initial entry into the workforce by new employees through their progression to the senior ranks of the Federal service. The centerpiece to this approach was a comprehensive, systematic "needs assessment" process, which included an attempt to link the resources that agencies commit to training and development to their mission and performance goals. The idea was to make strategic use of an agency's training and development activities, rather than have them used as rewards or "goodies" to be dispensed to

[20] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Interagency Agency Group memo dated January 21, 1992, p. 9.
[21] Robert Agresta, "Renaissance in Human Resources Development: Can We Afford It?," The Public Manager, Spring 1992, p. 24.

members of its workforce haphazardly or casually. OPM's contention was that Federal organizations have not always planned for the expenditure of their training resources around their strategic mission, business, and performance goals (current and future). OPM, in fact, questioned whether line managers have been given the tools they need to assess their HRD needs effectively along with creative ways to meet those needs.[22]

Based upon our review of agencies' and organizations' efforts, we would certainly concur in OPM's conclusions and recommendations. It is interesting that although it would almost certainly have been in the best interests of agencies and members of their workforce to establish more rigorous training needs assessment procedures, many agencies raised great protests to the proposed OPM regulations. Basically, the agencies believed they did not have sufficient HRD personnel and resources to devote to what, based upon past experience, they thought would still be a paperwork enterprise if there was no change in the roles played by both HRD specialists and managers in their organization. As a result of the agency concerns and the efforts of the National Performance Review to reduce Federal personnel management regulations, the proposed regulations were never enacted.

In lieu of the proposed regulations, OPM developed a Training Needs Assessment Workshop to help agencies learn techniques to improve their training needs assessment practices. A "Needs Assessment Handbook" was developed as a part of this effort. We reviewed the handbook and believe it probably would be helpful to organizations interested in improving the assessment of their training needs. In fact, the handbook was nominated by the National Society of Performance and Instruction for their Award of Excellence as a job aid.

According to our study participants, there is value in conducting credible assessments of training needs: those who do so believe they are better able to defend their budget requests and get the training their employees need to fulfill organizational objectives. Nevertheless, relatively few organizations have the resources, or in some cases the desire, to employ more rigorous procedures to ensure the accuracy of the results. This is unfortunate since organizations that can demonstrate their true needs increase the likelihood of having monies reallocated for training and development from other parts of their budgets. Even if budgets are not increased as a result of better assessment of needs, more rigorous assessments can ensure that the limited dollars that are spent are allocated more wisely.

Regardless of whether organizations are interested in more rigorous assessment of their training needs, ultimately the ability to defend or justify a training budget may rest not only on the ability to demonstrate that training is critical to mission performance but that it is effective. As one agency HRD head mentioned in response to our written questions, "While application and effective articulation of systematic, requirements-based needs assessment processes are critical to successful competition for adequate training and development funds, running a close second is the ability to demonstrate a return on our investment in HRD."

[22] Dona Wolf, "Revitalizing Federal Training and Development," The Bureaucrat, Summer 1991, p. 24.

Demonstrating the Value and Effectiveness of Training

Beyond the issue of whether Federal organizations conduct training needs assessments which yield credible results is the question of whether the training that is provided is effective. Organizations with resource limitations are not likely to devote more money to training and development if they do not believe they are getting a good return on their investment. As one agency HRD head told us, "Agency executives have to see training as an investment, not an expense, and see return on it. Training managers need to learn how to make that case." Unfortunately, our results indicated that HRD personnel in most organizations had a very difficult time attempting to measure the effects of training.

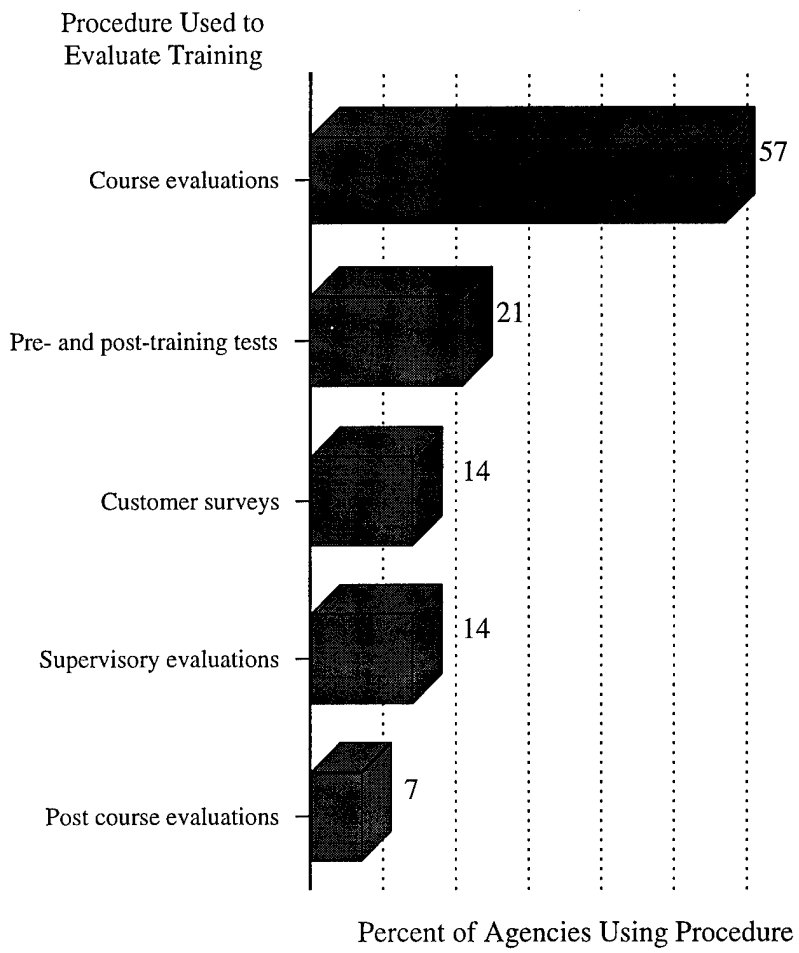
While both headquarters and HRD personnel in the field said that they shared the responsibility for evaluating the quality of the training they provided, neither group was particularly satisfied with the results of their efforts. When we asked agencies what they were doing to evaluate the effectiveness of the training they provided, we found little that would be of use in convincing management as to the value of training. According to the head of HRD in one agency, the processes used to evaluate training varied from nothing to "happy sheets"; i.e., course evaluations. Another agency official in charge of HRD offered a similar response: "We only collect the evaluation sheets at the end of classes. We do no long term followup."

Figure 4 shows the responses of agency HRD heads to a written survey question asking them what procedures they used to assess the quality of training. It should be noted that an agency reported using a certain type of procedure for evaluating training even if that procedure was used for only a small fraction of its training. As this figure clearly shows, the most common type of procedure used to assess the quality of training was a course evaluation completed at the end of a training course. Unfortunately, while this sort of evaluation probably says something about how the participants felt immediately after having received the training, it most likely says very little about what the participant took back to the job. Moreover, although 21 percent of the agencies said that they used the somewhat more rigorous type of evaluation provided by pre- and post-training tests, they also told us that they did this only rarely.

We also asked the HRD specialists participating in our telephone survey what procedures they used to evaluate the effectiveness of training. Again the most common procedure used was course evaluations by participants (89 percent), followed by followup evaluations by the employee's supervisor (54 percent) and post-course evaluations by participants (24 percent). Interestingly, even though 63 percent of the HRD professionals we interviewed said that there were ways to assess the quality of training, only 44 percent thought that their office did a good job of this. Moreover, when we asked them how much time their office spent on evaluating training effectiveness, we found that, on average, less than 5 percent of an HRD office's effort was devoted to this activity.

The general impression we received from all of our study participants was that very little effort was devoted to determining the value of

Figure 4. Percent of Agencies Using Each of the Following Procedures to Evaluate the Quality of Training for at Least Some Training Courses



Source: MSPB telephone survey of HRD specialists, April 1994.

training. There were several reasons given for this. The first was that the people working in HRD were too busy doing other things to evaluate the quality of training. More importantly, very few of the HRD specialists said that they were trained in evaluation, and most had no idea how to really evaluate the effectiveness of training. Some of the HRD specialists also indicated that in their view the attempt to determine the value of training was often fruitless. These respondents tended to think that it was often difficult if not impossible to quantify job performance and that there was, therefore, no real way to determine the return on investment associated with training.

OPM has also looked at the issue of the return on investment of training dollars and reached a somewhat similar conclusion. Discussions with OPM personnel revealed that in their view attempts to determine the value of training may not always be a good way of spending limited HRD resources. And in 1994 OPM noted that "a review of leading evaluation practices revealed that manufacturing organizations are particularly successful in establishing the

value of training. In a production-oriented environment, it is easier to link the results of training to the bottom-line profits of the organization. However, direct transfer of those evaluation methods and tools to the public sector has been difficult."[23]

From OPM's perspective, a successful program for evaluating the effectiveness of training hinges on several critical factors. These include: an accurate assessment of training needs; an organization that is prepared to invest the time, money, and human resources required to conduct the evaluation to completion; and the presence of a training staff which has the time and expertise to conduct effective evaluations.[24] Given the questionable nature of needs assessments in many Federal organizations, the shortage of HRD resources, and the lack of the required competencies in the staffs of many HRD offices, it was not surprising that our study participants suggested that most organizations in the Federal Government did not do a particularly good job of evaluating the effectiveness of training.[25]

As will be discussed shortly, part of the problem in assessing the value of training is that this really needs to be done as part of the evaluation of organizational performance. Unfortunately, in many parts of the Government, HRD has not been considered an important part of the overall management of the organization. The Volcker Commission recognized this problem when they reported, "Despite its reliance on in-house resources for training, the federal government does not invest to improve the quality of its programs. There are no major federal institutes with permanent staffs, ongoing research programs, and sustained curriculum development efforts."[26]

HRD as an Integral Part of Agency Planning

Interestingly, the agency HRD heads who responded to our written questions who thought their training budgets were sufficient to meet their needs shared a common vision as to why they were successful. In general, training budgets were more likely to be seen as adequate when training was not identified as a stand-alone or line item in either headquarters or field-level budgets. Training was more likely to be supported when costs were included in program funding. In essence, programs were justified but training was not except as an associated cost of running a program. According to one HRD head responding to our written questions: "Budgets are adequate when training has been clearly linked to the achievement of the organization's programmatic mission. They are inadequate when such justification is lacking or weak."

While this sort of approach may work for the agencies whose HRD and management programs are structured to operate in this manner, not all organizations work in this fashion.

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[23] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Human Resources Development Group, "Establishing the Value of Training," Washington, DC, March 1994, p. i.

[24] Ibid., p. ii.

[25] For offices that may want to undertake a more rigorous approach to evaluating the quality of their training, a resource guide developed by OPM entitled "Establishing the Value of Training" may be quite helpful. This guide offers a good introductory step-by-step approach to analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating training.

[26] Task Force Report to the National Commission on the Public Service, p. 145.

According to one agency official in charge of HRD: "Since we do not currently do strategic workforce planning, we do not know if we spend the right amount on developmental activities." Responses to our written questions indicated that this was probably the norm rather than the exception in the Federal Government. Once again, a similar conclusion was reached by the Volcker Commission. According to its report, "In most instances, agencies lack strategic plans for employee development and training. With a few exceptions such as IRS and EPA, federal training is voluntary, individually focused, and job-specific and bears little discernible relation to major agency objectives and mission."[27]

If organizations that have integrated HRD into the strategic planning process have been more successful in getting the funds they need to support training and development, why haven't more agencies taken this approach? Part of the problem may be the way in which managers, and even the people working in HRD in some organizations, look at training. According to some of our participants, management in their organizations viewed training as a quick fix for some types of problems instead of part and parcel of strategic planning. In fact, one agency official in charge of HRD thought that HRD was seen as personnel work which is administrative and tactical (e.g., processing job applications and training forms), not strategic.

To some degree, the problem may be a reflection of the view that is held of the people who work in HRD. Many of the HRD policymakers we talked to told us that the HRD function and the people working in this field were not respected by people working in the mission-related areas of many organizations. For this reason, many of the people working in HRD felt as if they had not been treated as part of the management team and their expertise had not been used in planning for the future of the organization. This is unfortunate since the successful integration of HRD with strategic planning rests in large part on the operation of agencies' and organizations' HRD programs and members of the HRD staff.

The Current Role of HRD Specialists

Concerns about the integration of HRD activities with organizational functioning and the appropriate roles for HRD specialists prompted OPM and its Interagency Advisory Group Committee on Development and Training to undertake a project to identify the general roles and competencies needed by HRD professionals in the Federal Government. The purpose of this project was to strengthen agencies' ability to effectively use the HRD function to respond to organizational needs and to provide a guide for the development of agency HRD staffs.[28]

Through this project, OPM identified the tasks and competencies for five types of HRD professionals that were typically associated with successful HRD programs. A description of the five roles is shown in table 3, as is a listing of several general competencies that are found in almost all HRD positions. Although five types of HRD professionals were identi-

[27] Ibid., p. 143.

[28] For a discussion of the roles of HRD specialists see U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Roles and Competencies of the Human Resource Development Professional in the Federal Government," Washington, DC, October 1992.

Table 3: Roles and Competencies for Human Resource Development Specialists

Staff Role	Competency
Training and Development Specialist	Designs, develops, conducts, and/or evaluates learning experiences.
Organizational Development Specialist	Works with managers and employees to improve the relationships and processes between and among individuals and groups.
Career Development Specialist	Assists organizations to design career programs for an entire occupational or functional group.
Program Manager	Interacts with higher level managers to plan how the HRD program can best support the organization's strategic direction.
Support Specialist	Arranges, coordinates, and maintains the support services for various HRD programs.
All (Core Competencies)	Identify major mission responsibilities for the organization.
	Determine and analyze needs.
	Identify and develop solutions to HRD problems.
	Establish credibility with organization personnel.
	Provide responsive service.
	Interact with diverse individuals.
	Communicate effectively.

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Roles and Competencies of the Human Resource Development Professional in the Federal Government," Washington, DC, October 1992.

fied in the OPM guidance, in a given occupational setting HRD specialists may function in more than one role.

Our review of the roles and competencies expected of HRD specialists as outlined in OPM's publication made it clear to us that if HRD specialists were performing all of these functions well, there would very likely be good integration of the HRD program and organization missions. Unfortunately, the HRD specialists we talked to thought programs that worked this way were the exception rather than the rule. The impression that we obtained was that the real services provided by HRD specialists were quite different from the ones envisioned by OPM. As one HRD policymaker said:

> Training's contribution to organizational effectiveness cannot be questioned. What can be questioned is the degree of contribution. I have observed trainers at work and, for the most part, they have been measured by their ability to create training opportunities. Putting people into courses has been a measure of their success. Success was a function of buying a course at the lowest possible price and filling it to capacity. If trainers did that, then management was happy, employees were happy, and the trainers were judged to be effective.

Given this perspective, we thought it would be helpful to find out what HRD specialists really did in their jobs. We were particularly interested in the work performed by people in the field. For this reason, we decided to use a telephone survey to find out more about the work actually performed by HRD specialists. As mentioned earlier, we conducted interviews with 122 randomly selected people currently working in HRD. In order to be sure that we were tapping people who had substantial knowledge of training and development, in each case we asked to speak with the person in charge of HRD for his or her organization. Table 4 shows our respondents' general characteristics.

As table 4 shows, most of the people interviewed as part of our telephone survey had quite a bit of experience in HRD. The average

Table 4. Characteristics of Respondents to the HRD Telephone Survey

Average:		Percent who were:	
Years' Experience in HRD	10	Employee Development Specialists	52
Grade	12	Personnel Management Specialists	29
Size of HRD Staff	4	Supervisors	65
Population Serviced	2,559	Female	66
Size of HRM Staffs	17		

respondent had worked in the function for slightly more than 10 years. Additionally, 77 percent had been in the field 4 or more years. Approximately two-thirds of our respondents were women and in supervisory positions. Although the average grade was GS-12, in fact, almost 60 percent were in grades GS-12 or higher. As the information in this table also illustrates, the HRD staffs in most of the organizations tended to be small. In many cases there was a single person devoted to HRD, who provided support for a relatively large number of employees.

In order to find out what HRD specialists were doing in their jobs, we asked our interviewees to tell us whether they performed certain tasks and, if they did not, whether someone else in their office did these jobs. The tasks we chose to ask about were drawn from both the roles and competencies identified by OPM and our discussion with HRD policymakers. Our list was not meant to cover all aspects of the work performed by HRD specialists, but was designed to look at areas that were critical to meeting the long-term training and development needs of most organizations. We also included several tasks which we had been told represented some of the most time-consuming aspects of the work performed by many of the people working in the HRD field.

The results of our survey are shown in table 5, which lists 14 tasks, the percent of offices having these responsibilities, and the percent of our telephone survey respondents who actually performed these duties.

As these results indicate, for the most part, if the task was done in the office, the person we interviewed did it. This was not surprising given the small number of people devoted to HRD in most organizations. What was somewhat surprising, however, was the fact that most of the people doing these tasks were themselves supervisors and normally were in charge of HRD activities for their organization.

We also asked the respondents who actually performed a task how much time they spent doing so. According to our respondents, they spent relatively little time on identifying career paths, conducting performance analyses, or conducting diagnostic skill testing. By far the least amount of time was spent participating in strategic planning. The vast majority of these HRD specialists' time was spent on approving training requests, solving HRD problems, and arranging for course logistics. These activities were followed by serving as a trainer. It is important to recognize that some other common HRD activities were not included in our survey, such as identifying sources for meeting training needs, which in all likelihood also required large amounts of time.

In a sense, although most of the respondents to our survey held the title of employee development specialist and were frequently the most senior person in HRD in their organizations, in reality much of their time was spent performing administrative kinds of work—the kinds of work that one would think would normally be the responsibility of support specialists. This impression was corroborated by statements from the HRD specialists themselves. According to one respondent, "More than half of my time is spent processing travel for employees to attend training."

It is perhaps not surprising that the activities that appeared to dominate the time of HRD specialists in the field were also the very same tasks that they believed were performed the best. More than 90 percent of the people we interviewed thought that their offices did a

Table 5. Tasks Performed by HRD Specialists in the Field

Tasks Performed	Percent of Offices Performing Task	Percent of Respondents Performing Task
Approving training requests	94	89
Solving HRD problems	93	88
Arranging for course logistics	92	84
Evaluating training effectiveness	90	88
Serving as a trainer	82	78
Defending training budget requests	74	70
Conducting individual needs assessments	70	70
Conducting organizational needs assessments	68	66
Participating in strategic planning	65	63
Validating instructional design	64	56
Conducting occupational needs assessment	61	59
Developing career paths	56	49
Conducting performance analysis	53	45
Conducting diagnostic skills testing	19	17

good job of approving training requests and taking care of the logistics associated with conducting training courses. By contrast, less than half believed that their offices did a good job of evaluating the effectiveness of training, conducting training needs assessments, and participating in strategic planning. In other words, the very activities that were identified as critical to supporting the most successful training programs were the tasks that HRD specialists typically spent the least time on and thought that they did least well.

The Current State of Human Resources Development

Given the requirements that would fall to HRD as a result of the changes anticipated based on the recommendations of the National Performance Review, the Board was particularly concerned with whether HRD offices in the field are ready and able to assist management in attempting to meet these new demands. In particular, does the style of management existing in most organizations encourage the inclusion of HRD personnel in the strategic planning process? And are the HRD structures currently in place prepared to support their organizations in the acquisition of the new skills that current Federal workers will need to meet changing mission requirements in the future? Put another way, are the people working in HRD positioned to assist organizations and employees as they attempt to find new ways to perform their jobs more efficiently? As we reviewed the information collected during the course of this study it became clear that the answers to these questions depend in some measure on the role HRD staff play in the strategic planning of their organizations. Is HRD really an integrated part of the development of the organization or only a peripheral element providing logistical support?

In order to find out more about this issue, we addressed a series of questions to both our telephone survey participants and the people in charge of HRD for their agencies. Our first question, a written one addressed to the agencies, was whether HRD personnel at headquarters were expected to play a significant role in developing strategic plans for meeting their organization's mission requirements. Half of our respondents did not believe that this was expected of them and 25 percent said this only occurred some of the time. The prevalent view of the agencies responding to our written questions, with a few exceptions, was that this was a relatively new idea. According to the person in charge of HRD at one agency, the way things have always worked was that "the HRD function is involved after the 'important' decisions have been made." In general, this was seen as a reflection of how the human resource program was viewed in many agencies, where, as one HRD specialist noted, "Either there is a distrust of the HRD professionals or we have not been aggressive enough to get a seat at the table."

Even so, things appear to be in the process of changing, at least in some places. As the head of HRD in one agency reported, "As the agency has improved its strategic planning processes, there is growing recognition of a need for employee development expertise." Likewise, other agencies noted that they are "just getting started on this" and "a new planning office has been established to integrate and expand the role of HRD in meeting the Department's mission requirements."

When we asked HRD specialists in the field whether members of their staff were expected to play a key role in the development of strategic plans, we found that many did not think so. Figure 5, which shows their response to this question, indicates that less than half of the respondents played a key role in the development of strategic plans. Additionally, when we asked how effectively this function was performed, only 44 percent thought that their offices did a good job.

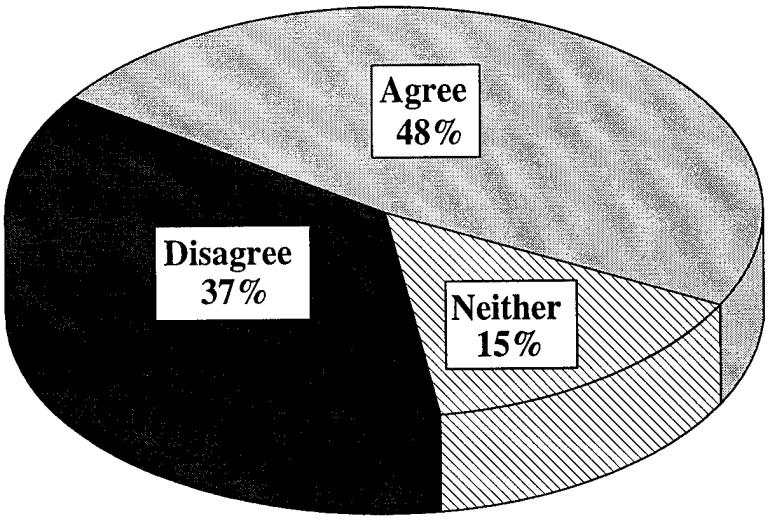
We also asked the people in charge of HRD for their agencies whether HRD personnel in the field were expected to play a significant role in the strategic planning that occurs for their organization. Two-thirds of the agencies said that HRD specialists in the field did not have this responsibility. One common re-

sponse was that the HRD specialist functions were combined with personnel functions in the field and, therefore, employees in this area performed primarily administrative functions. In other organizations, we were told that HRD specialists were considered too low in the organization to be involved in planning. In a few agencies, the integration of HRD programs with program management varied by organization. In some locations HRD staffs were full partners with management while in others HRD specialists were perceived as administrative support staff and not involved in strategic planning.

Assuming that HRD personnel in the field were expected to play a significant role in strategic planning, we asked those in charge of HRD for their agency whether these employees were adequately prepared to take on this role. Given the results reported above, it was not surprising that the overwhelming majority of agency HRD heads did not believe that members of their HRD staffs were prepared to do this job. In fact, the responses suggested that, with a few exceptions, HRD specialists were not adequately prepared to assume a strategic planning role. According to several agencies, many HRD specialists will need training in strategic planning concepts to meet this expectation, although at least one agency said that for the past several years they have offered courses to improve these capabilities.

Figure 5. Views of Survey Respondents on a Question Concerning the Role of HRD Specialists in Developing Strategic Plans

"HRD Specialists in my organization are expected to play a key role in the development of strategic plans."



Source: MSPB telephone survey of HRD specialists, April 1994.

This picture of HRD specialists in the field is also

one that was frequently held by agency policymakers in HRD. In our discussions with these policymakers, we found that some thought that many of the people in the field were, in their words, "little more than paper pushers." Further discussion revealed that part of the reason for this was that training in many organizations was seen as remedial rather then proactive and the main job of HRD specialists was to get people into courses. Another aspect of the problem may be related to the fact that the training and development function in many agencies is part of the personnel office. Where this was the case, we found that training and development was frequently thought to occupy the bottom of the human resources management hierarchy. According to some of the HRD policymakers we interviewed, some of the people currently working in HRD have been the ones who were not successful in other areas of personnel. Their view was that some people have gravitated to HRD since, as we found through our telephone survey, in many places the job involved primarily administrative responsibilities.

It is interesting to note that a surprisingly large number of the HRD specialists in the field who participated in our telephone survey also thought that their job was primarily an administrative one. When we asked them to describe their role, many saw it as being a jack-of-all-trades, delivering whatever product was asked of them. According to one, "If you want the windows washed we will wash them, if you want something done we will do it." Unfortunately, the product they were delivering was not necessarily related to human resources development, and few of our respondents thought that they were valued for their HRD expertise. Generally speaking, they did not believe that management particularly looked to them in their role of HRD specialists. There was simply no acknowledgment by management of the special capabilities they were supposed to bring to an organization. The exception to this was in a few offices where the focus was on career development, but here the emphasis was often on meeting individual needs and not those of the organization.

If many of the HRD specialists in the field are not involved in the strategic planning process and in some cases are performing primarily administrative tasks, it may be difficult for organizations to achieve the goals set forth by the National Performance Review. Specifically, some organizations may experience difficulties preparing their workforce for future mission requirements. Other organizations may have trouble preparing members of their workforce to work in new ways (e.g., as an integrated member of a team) or for transition to new jobs in new organizations within the Federal Government or new jobs in the private sector.

This was precisely the view of some of the agency HRD heads who responded to our written questions. One told us simply that HRD specialists were not adequately prepared, while another elaborated by saying: "Most HRD specialists are not prepared to assume roles as management consultants and organizational change agents. They will have to be retrained and earn the respect of managers and executives in their new roles." Most agencies did, however, recognize that for HRD to be an effective force in their organization in the future, change would be essential. As the head of HRD in one agency said:

> In the past, field-level HRD specialists have served in primarily two roles—that of support specialists coordinating and maintaining HRD support services or that of the training and development specialist developing and conducting training classes * * *. However, as more responsibility is delegated to field-level managers there will be an increased need for the HRD community to provide full-fledged advisory support and fill the roles of organization development specialists and career development specialists.

Given this state of affairs, how do we get members of the HRD staff to take on the responsibilities envisioned by OPM guidance concerning the role and competencies of HRD specialists? If the responses provided by agencies are accurate reflections of the situation, the task may be difficult, especially since in most agencies, relatively few people have been devoted to the HRD function and those who are working in this field seem to be overwhelmed by administrative duties. In fact, when we asked HRD specialists what besides limited training budgets was the greatest challenge they faced in their work, they cited the lack of sufficient personnel to handle the work in HRD. Unfortunately, the situation is not likely to get much better in the near future since human resource management staffs have been identified by the NPR as areas where staff reductions should occur.

Moreover, as one agency HRD head noted:

> Implementation of NPR will require a major culture change for the HRD community. These changes will demand new attitudes, behaviors and skills. HRD specialists who have acted as "paper pushers" and "police officers" of proposed management actions will have increased responsibility to develop a competent, multi-skilled and highly flexible workforce. Many HRD and HRM specialists will be ill prepared for their new roles of consultants and advisors to management. Therefore, agencies must aggressively address the training and development of their total HRM community. However, the responsibility to update the HRM/HRD skills must be shared by both individuals and the organizations which they serve.

The Current State of Human Resources Development

Creating a Strategic Human Resources Development Function

Current Approaches to HRD Are Not Effective Enough

The information collected during the course of this study makes it clear that at least some members of the Federal workforce have not been receiving all of the training they believe is needed for them to perform their jobs efficiently. Since the Government spends significant amounts of money on training, we can only conclude that these funds are not always spent wisely. Apparently, employees are sent to training for a variety of reasons, not all of which necessarily lead to improved individual or organizational performance.

While the finding that some employees are not receiving the training they need to do their job well is a problem in and of itself, much more serious questions arise when we consider the implications of our study for future attempts to restructure the Federal bureaucracy along the lines outlined by the National Performance Review. Unless the mechanisms for identifying and meeting training needs improve, Federal employees may have a difficult time getting the training they need to adapt to the changes that will be required to reach this goal.

Although most of the participants in our study thought that inadequate budgets for training were the source of most of their problems, in our view, the Government can not expect to meet all of its training and development needs simply by increasing the amount of money allocated to training. Even if it were feasible to do so, providing more money by itself would not ensure that employees receive the training they really need to perform their jobs well both now and in the future. Moreover, the lack of funding is itself at least partially a result of problems in the systems that many Government organizations use to deliver HRD services. Efforts to educate agency management to the importance of viewing training as an investment need to continue, but by themselves are unlikely to lead to significant increases in training budgets, particularly in times of severe resource limitations across all of the Government.

Since the problems do not stem from budgetary constraints alone, the solution proposed by some HRD specialists of setting aside a fixed percentage of personnel budgets would probably not work in many organizations. Attempts to set aside a fixed amount for training may slow down the erosion of training budgets in some organizations, but will not ultimately ensure that Federal employees are getting the training they need to work efficiently.

Theoretically, a better way to ensure that training budgets are adequate is to allocate funding for human resources development based on a thorough assessment of training needs and priorities rather than an artificially established budget target. Unfortunately, we found that the procedures used to determine training needs were, in many organizations,

cursory and frequently lacked credibility with management. All too often organizations either lacked the resources, or in other cases the desire, to employ more rigorous procedures to ensure the accuracy of the results. This is regrettable since even if budgets are not increased as a result of better assessment of needs, more rigorous assessments can at least help ensure that the limited dollars that are spent are allocated more wisely.

In addition to a general failure to conduct accurate needs assessments, we found that relatively little real effort was devoted to determining the value of training that was provided. In some cases, the people working in HRD were too busy doing other things, but in many other instances they admitted that they had no idea how to really evaluate the effectiveness of training. While this was again unfortunate, since the demonstration of the value of training could help agencies make better training decisions, in reality, attempts to assess the value of training may not be worth the effort in many Federal organizations. It is extremely difficult to quantify the results of most of the work performed in the Government and without this type of assessment it is impossible to really show that training is or is not cost-effective. Given this limitation, the use of complex procedures to attempt to determine the value of training is often not a good way of expending limited HRD resources.

Agencies Need a New Approach to HRD

Unfortunately, there do not appear to be any simple solutions to the problems we have identified in this study. Instead, in order to be successful in their reinvention efforts, many organizations in the Government will have to fundamentally change the way they have looked at training and development. In the past, managers in many organizations have acted as if training and development activities were not a critical part of the management of their employees. Training in many places does not appear to be linked to strategic planning and program evaluation efforts. In fact, many organizations appear to give little credence to the results of their own training needs assessments. Since success in the future is likely to be tied to an organization's ability to change and improve the way it does business, organizations will need to look for ways in which they can facilitate this sort of change. Managers in these organizations must come to realize that the accomplishment of their mission objectives in the future may well rest on learning to use their HRD resources in new ways.

For this to happen, change must occur in the way HRD is viewed by management. When improvements are needed or dramatic changes in work processes are expected, managers need to be encouraged to—and need to be able to—seek out HRD specialists for their expertise. Ultimately, managers and agencies must shift to budgeting for training and running training programs as part of their strategic planning and program evaluation efforts. HRD offices should become assets for managers to use as they attempt to strategically develop their organizations.

The Role Played by HRD Staffs Must Change

To effect this kind of transformation, members of HRD staffs will also have to change. In the ideal organization, members of an organization's HRD staff would be active partners with management in ensuring that

the organization's mission is being accomplished. The first step towards this goal may be convincing management that the primary concern of HRD is the business of the organization and accomplishing mission objectives. For some HRD specialists this may represent a somewhat radical departure from the way they have been doing business—many of them told us that their main emphasis was on employees' personal career development needs and taking care of the logistics associated with the delivery of training rather than responding to organizational problems. Although there will be a continued need to provide administrative support for training and development, the role of most HRD specialists should involve much more than just this. Unfortunately, when so few resources are devoted to this function it may be difficult for HRD specialists to have the time to do more. Nevertheless, managers and organizations need to have the assistance that capable HRD specialists can provide: they need to be thinking about what can be done to improve organizational performance.

Of course, transforming traditional HRD systems will require changing traditional attitudes. To change traditional attitudes HRD administrators will have to create systems that support management, rather than simply process paperwork and rigidly control for potential abuses.[29] To accomplish this, HRD specialists in the future will have to focus on the mission of the organization, relate human resource development to that mission, and help management develop and implement strategies to meet their organizational training needs as a part of overall strategy for achieving organizational objectives. As most of our study participants noted, this will require consulting and facilitation skills. Unfortunately, some HRD specialists do not currently have these skills and apparently are not prepared philosophically for this new role. In order to be successful, HRD specialists will have to learn how to demonstrate to management the value of the service they can provide and the key role HRD can play in achieving the organization's mission.

To successfully redefine their roles, HRD personnel will also need to stay in touch with the people charged with fulfilling the mission of the organization. Members of the HRD staff will have to make themselves more accessible to both front-line and senior management. They will have to be initiators of the process and be able to propose innovative solutions to organizational problems. They will also have to be able to evaluate their proposed training solutions and come up with alternatives as they are needed. HRD staffs also need to emphasize training that is important for their organizations in the long run and not simply be caught up in whatever type of training is in favor this month. People who oversell training because it is topical will run the risk of losing organizational credibility once the fad runs its course. For this sort of transformation to work, the necessary underlying changes will also have to be supported by agency HRD policy-makers. As with many other human resource management activities, there has been a tendency for the activities of HRD specialists in the field to be rather rigidly controlled by policy made by headquarters. The people in charge of agency HRD pro-

[29] National Academy of Pubic Administration, p. 8.

grams will, therefore, need to develop policies that outline the new roles and responsibilities of HRD specialists in the field. Without this sort of support and guidance, HRD specialists may have a difficult time accepting these new duties, especially since their work time is already frequently filled by administrative tasks.

Even though we have been discussing a change in focus for many of the people working in HRD, it should be noted that many of the processes underlying the best HRD programs will remain the same. What we are talking about is an emphasis on more of a systems approach to training and development. Concepts such as multilevel needs assessment and Instructional Systems Design will be just as valuable in the future as they were in the past. These are still the tools that the HRD community will rely upon in any attempt to fulfill organizational needs. The point is simply that HRD needs to pay more attention to the bigger picture.

While the fundamental processes may remain the same, it is more problematic whether all of the people currently working in HRD will be able to undertake the new, larger roles we have outlined. Unquestionably for some the transition will not be difficult. After all, what we are suggesting is really quite similar to the roles identified for HRD specialists by OPM. For the people who already agree that this should be their role, changing for the future may only be an issue of stepping out and marketing themselves and their services. Hopefully, the conditions are now such that they will find a more receptive audience than sometimes has been the case in the past. The reward for these people could well be greater respect in their own organizations and a greater opportunity to accomplish something important. In fact, there is a real chance that HRD positions may come to be seen as the most important jobs in the human resources management office.

In a sense, HRD specialists may become the point people for all of human resources management. The opportunity to have a real impact on organizational performance may encourage employees from other human resource management activities to gravitate to HRD positions. If this occurs attempts should be made to shift employees to the roles that are most appropriate for their skills and abilities. If HRD programs are going to be truly effective in improving organizational performance, HRD positions must be staffed with the highest possible quality employees. Unfortunately this will need to be done at a time when the entire human resource management function will also have to deal with the pressures of streamlining, reduced funding, deregulation, HRM staff reductions, and agency downsizing.

While some HRD specialists will adapt to these new roles easily, others may find the transition we are advocating much more difficult. For some of these employees training may help. For others the way their organizations are managed may need to change before they can be accepted in the roles we have proposed. In these latter cases policy directives may be needed to require local management to include representatives from HRD in the strategic planning and evaluation process.

Program Evaluation and Strategic Planning May Be the Keys

The people working in HRD told us time and time again that they were not treated as part of their organization's management team. In our view, the solution to this problem may hinge on getting HRD involved in the organization's strategic planning and program evaluation processes. The idea of having HRD personnel become more active partners in the management of organizations was also advanced in a report of the National Academy of Pubic Administration which called for a new framework for human resources management. This report suggested integrating all human resources management activities into an organization's strategic processes. The first step toward reaching this goal is having the organization recognize that human resources management is a critical factor in accomplishing its mission. This begins when the organization's management realizes that its employees are assets rather than simply part of the costs of doing business.[30]

Perhaps the best method for changing the way agencies approach HRD is to get Federal organizations committed to evaluating their current performance and including the HRD function in the process. The key is for organizations to recognize that improvement is something to be pursued and that the HRD function can help in dealing with many of the problems that may be identified in the process of attempting to reach this goal.

If an organization has made the commitment to meaningful program evaluation, and based on such evaluations decides that improvement is required, a further determination can then be made as to whether training can provide the best solution for organizational and productivity problems. This process, which has been described as a front-end analysis,[31] is probably the best method for conducting an accurate assessment of training needs. This front-end analysis of needs can be based on either current performance or a forecast of future requirements. The most important parts of the process are defining desired performance, identifying the gap between desired and actual performance, and uncovering likely obstacles to desired performance.[32]

Generally speaking, if management has been involved in this process, and is convinced that training is the most effective means for dealing with the identified problems or issues, then funds for the training will be provided.[33] However, the process of evaluation should not stop once a training solution has been proposed. Future performance should be evaluated to see whether the proposed training solution has been effective in solving the organization's problems. If sufficient improvement has been made then the value of including the HRD community in the program evaluation process will have been demonstrated to management.

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[30] Ibid., p. 11.

[31] For more information on this approach to structuring organizational HRD programs see: Micheal Mercer, "Turning Your Human Resources Department into a Profit Center," the American Management Association, New York, 1989; and Margaret Rahn Keene, "The Training Investment: Banking for Superior Results," Business Irwin, Homewood, Il., 1991.

[32] David Hobbs, "A Training-Appropriations Process," Training and Development Journal, vol. 44, No. 5, May 1990, p. 110.

[33] For a good description of the factors that should be considered in determining whether training can provide the best solution to organizational and productivity problems see: Dana Gaines Robinson and Jim Robinson, "Training for Impact," Training and Development Journal, vol. 43, No. 8, August 1989, pp. 34-42.

Although as discussed earlier the creation of elaborate programs to establish the value of training is often not cost-effective, it is critical that organizations include some evaluation of training effectiveness as part of the program evaluation process. Organizations should be continually reviewing their operations to see how close they are coming toward meeting their mission objectives. Part of this review process should look at whether any training that has been provided to solve organizational problems has indeed resulted in improved performance. If training is not successful or does not provide cost-effective solutions in dealing with the issues and problems that have been identified, then funds may not be made available for training that is intended to deal with the same issues or problems in the future.[34]

OPM has also recognized the importance of this front-end approach to identifying training needs and obtaining resources. As a result, the Human Resources Development Group staff of OPM has put together guidance for conducting this type of analysis as a companion document to its "Training Needs Assessment Handbook."[35] While this publication does not present a lot of detail on the reasons for using this method of determining training needs, it does provide HRD personnel with a simple step-by-step approach for constructing a business case for investments in training.

For this type of front-end analysis process to really work, there has to be a commitment to continual evaluation of organizational performance. Many organizations have not devoted much effort to evaluating how well they are meeting their mission objectives. We hope the efforts of the National Performance Review will be instrumental in changing organizational perspectives on this issue. An even more important impetus may be provided by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). This act mandates the creation of a Chief Operating Officer within each agency with responsibility for ensuring that their organizations have the human resources to accomplish their mission, and this includes ensuring that members of their workforce are properly trained. This act was introduced as a means to reform managerial accountability and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programs within the Federal Government. The act also requires agencies to develop the information necessary to strengthen program management, to make objective assessments of program performance, and to set measurable goals for future performance. The idea of the GPRA is to require agencies to create 5-year strategic plans and annual performance plans complete with measurable performance goals and objectives.

At least one researcher has come to the conclusion that the GPRA or something like it will be a critical part of any real effort to reinvent the Government. In his view, "Long-term success requires the NPR to build a force at the center of government, perhaps in the Office of Man-

[34] A detailed description of the factors that should be considered when attempting to determine whether training has been cost-effective is provided in: Anthony P. Carnevale and Eric Schultz, "Return on Investment: Accounting for Training," Training and Development Journal, vol. 44, No. 7, July 1990, pp. s-1 to s-30.

[35] See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Making the 'Business Case' for HRD Investments: A Tool for Making Training and Development Decisions," Washington, DC, 1994.

agement and Budget, to focus government on results and avoid having the reform spin off into scores of different, unconnected directions."[36]

In our view, the GPRA also provides the opportunity for the HRD function and, in fact, the entire human resources management operation to redefine itself in many Federal organizations. People working in human resources management have long lamented that they frequently are not treated as if they are a part of management. As organizations develop systems to ensure that they are meeting their mission objectives, people working in HRD and human resources management in general need to step forward and take an active role in helping make their organizations more effective. As we mentioned earlier, this will mean less emphasis on being policemen and gatekeepers and more emphasis on understanding the goals of their organizations and how they work and then actively supporting the strategic accomplishment of those goals.

Although the GPRA may provide a window of opportunity for the inclusion of HRD in the strategic management of Federal organizations, the people who work in HRD must be prepared to take advantage of this possibility. Accomplishing the objectives of the GPRA may require significant amounts of training in organizational performance management. At this time few employees within or outside HRD are likely to have the skills needed to develop and apply performance measures to the thousands of programs run by the Federal Government. People working in human resources management programs need to make sure that they are included in agency efforts to learn how to measure organizational performance.

[36] Donald F. Kettl, "Reinventing Government? Appraising the National Performance Review," A Report of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Management, The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC, Aug. 19, 1994, p. viii.

The Role of OPM in Human Resources Development

As mentioned earlier, the authority for conducting HRD activities has, for the most part, been delegated to the various Federal agencies. For this reason, this report has primarily addressed the operation of HRD programs in agencies across the Federal Government. In general, OPM's role in HRD has been rather limited by virtue of the decentralization of training and development responsibilities, with the agency actually providing only a small fraction of the total amount of training conducted for Federal employees. Until recently OPM has been responsible for providing executive-level training and has also offered training in personnel management, labor relations, equal employment opportunity, communications, information resources management, and productivity improvement. Additionally, OPM has been looked to for overall guidance in HRD and, of course, has been responsible for the guidance on HRD included in the Federal Personnel Manual (FPM). However, most of this guidance was recently rescinded with the abolishment of the FPM as a result of the NPR efforts.

While we did not review the operation of OPM's training programs as a formal part of this study, we were told by several agencies that they were generally pleased with the quality of training provided at OPM's Federal Executive Institute. A few agencies did, however, believe that the quality of this training had slipped a bit in recent years. There was general agreement that the other types of training available through OPM were also of high quality, but many agencies thought that this training was too expensive. This impression was explained in a recent report on the "Systemic Issues Contributing to the Financial Difficulties of the OPM Revolving Fund" by OPM's Office of the Inspector General. According to this report, "Many revolving fund managers complained that they are not able to compete with the private sector because of agency overhead charges, the need for capital investment and rental of training space, the cost of product development, and federal regulations which limit their ability to adapt to market trends in a timely and competitive fashion."[37] Based upon this report, it is our understanding that efforts are currently being made to ensure that OPM recovers the costs associated with training, while at the same time determining whether its training is competitively priced. In reality this may now be a moot issue since, as we discuss below, OPM has recently decided to privatize much of its training delivery.

When asked about OPM's role in leading Governmentwide training efforts, agencies told us that, in their opinion, OPM's efforts in HRD have varied greatly over the years. According to our respondents, historically there has been little consistency in direction or philosophy from OPM. Changes seemed to them to occur both with changes in administrations and the assignment of new people to the HRD area within OPM. From the point of

[37] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of Evaluation and Inspection, "Systemic Issues Contributing to the Financial Difficulties of the OPM Revolving Fund," Washington, DC, August 1994, p. 3.

view of at least some of our study participants, the continual changes in direction and philosophy have cost OPM credibility with both agencies and HRD staffs.

Changes that have occurred in recent years, while not necessarily reflecting a dramatic shift in philosophy, illustrate the concerns voiced by the agencies. As discussed earlier in this report, during 1992 OPM set out to develop regulations that would have required agencies to conduct systematic needs analysis as the basis for training decisions. This initiative would have required agencies to put in place policies and procedures for comprehensive needs assessments linked to desired levels of employee performance. After agencies raised considerable objections about the creation of what they thought might become an inordinate paperwork burden for their already overtaxed HRD staffs, OPM withdrew the proposed regulations.

At the same time that OPM was considering regulations to require more systematic needs assessments, it also was considering other regulatory changes. These included Federal Personnel Manual regulations or guidance concerning:[38]

> Systematic, planned, and timely orientation programs for new employees;
>
> The identification of job-related skills and knowledges needed for an agency's major career occupations;
>
> Periodic assessments by agency heads of the changing training needs of their major occupational groups;
>
> Actions to promote systematic career development of the Federal workforce in general, and executives, managers, and supervisors in particular;
>
> Identification of the competencies to be addressed in training new supervisors and managers;
>
> Developmental programs to supplement formal training for incumbent supervisors and managers; and
>
> An emphasis on supervisory, managerial, and executive development which included requirements for the number of hours of training required for all supervisors and managers.[39]

With the abolishment of much of the FPM, some of these projects were dropped and others were modified. Adding to the changes at OPM, the Human Resources Development Group (HRDG) at OPM was reorganized in 1994 into 5 units and experienced a reduction of about 80 positions. Further changes in OPM's HRD program are contemplated as part of OPM's plan for the redesign of the agency as announced in January 1995. According to OPM's plan, an Office of Executive Resources will have the responsibility for both executive policy and executive development.

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[38] See U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "OPM HRD Policy Initiatives," Washington, DC, June 1992.

[39] OPM's proposal would have required that new supervisors receive 40 hours of formal training within the first 6 months of their appointment as a supervisor and an additional 40 hours within the first 2 years. New managers who had previously completed the supervisory probationary period (and received the required supervisory training) would have been required to receive 40 hours of training within 6 months of appointment as a manager based upon the managerial competencies established by OPM and on a needs assessment. It is interesting to note that many agencies took exception to the idea of OPM issuing requirements that specified the numbers of hours of training that would be required for supervisors, but at the same time suggested that this was not because they didn't think the training was needed. Instead, they were afraid they would not have the resources or could not get their executives to spare the time to take training. Of course this is exactly the argument some would use to suggest that this type of training should be mandated.

This office will oversee policy and operations for the Senior Executive Service as well as the Federal Executive Institute and the Management Development Centers. The responsibility for training policy will be transferred to a newly established office called Human Resources Systems Service.

In the future, OPM will no longer offer training other than in the executive and management development area. By not offering as large a variety of training, OPM's budget will decrease. However, this does not mean that a decrease will occur in the amount of money spent by agencies in obtaining training for their employees in personnel management, labor relations, equal employment opportunity, communications, information resources management, and productivity improvement. These types of training will still be needed and, if available, funds will continue to be spent to get employees the training they need. The net result is likely to be no savings in the amount of money the Government spends to train employees in these areas. The jobs performed by HRD specialists may, however, become more difficult as a result of this change. HRD specialists in the future will have to find new sources for obtaining the types of training previously performed by OPM. Moreover, they will have to spend more time determining whether the new training sources are doing an adequate job. As most of our participants noted, the quality of the training they have received from OPM in the past has been at least adequate, if not superior.

In the interim at least, OPM is offering two new courses for HRD professionals. These are "HRD in the Public Sector" and "The HR Professional as a Consultant." The first course will emphasize performing the skills and competencies OPM identified as critical for HRD specialists that we discussed earlier in this report. The second course, which may be applicable to people working throughout the human resources management profession, will focus on the consulting skills that will be required if HRD specialists are to become true partners in the management of their organizations.

Although OPM has no plan to publish the proposed regulations on training needs assessment that we discussed earlier, we understand that OPM intends to continue to emphasize the importance of accurately identifying training and development requirements and then designing strategies targeted to agency-specific needs. Ultimately both of these objectives will be supported through the Training Assistance Services that may be privatized at some time in the future. It is expected that these services will include:

- Conducting needs analysis
- Conducting task analysis
- Preparing trainer profiles
- Developing training plans
- Preparing learning objectives
- Identifying training resources
- Developing training materials
- Conducting training evaluation studies
- Constructing test items or other objective measures

As mentioned previously, OPM has also periodically provided courses on such key issues as needs assessment and evaluating the quality of training. And, as discussed earlier, Handbooks providing guidance to HRD

personnel on needs assessment, return on investment procedures, procedures for establishing the value of training, and ways of making the "business case" for training investment have also all been recently issued by HRDG. We have reviewed these handbooks and believe that each one can provide valuable assistance to the people operating HRD programs for their organizations.

To improve its support of agency HRD programs, OPM has also established the Human Resources Development Information Clearinghouse (HRD INFP), an electronic system dedicated to Federal HRD activities. The clearinghouse is designed to enable the user to access and read a wide variety of Government human resource development material. Included on this network is information concerning OPM policy initiatives, national HRD issues, HRD management issues, "best practices" of the public and private sectors, course design and development, training programs, and training as an investment. The system also allows the user to browse through Federal job announcements and training schedules, read and exchange messages with other users, and download files and bulletins. Similarly, OPM has made information concerning training and development issues available through the Government Training Newsletter, which can be accessed through OPM's electronic bulletin board called Mainstreet.

It is our understanding OPM will also continue to operate the Training Management Assistance Program, which streamlines the procurement of training from a group of 21 preapproved private vendors. This is a program that received high praise from virtually all of the agencies which participated in our study. According to one HRD specialist, "This is the most effective way to develop top-quality guaranteed training packages without either wasting money reinventing the wheel or taking risks with untested contractors." To its credit, OPM periodically runs open houses where agency representatives can become acquainted with the program and new technologies.

While most of the participants in our study indicated that they were not in favor of OPM issuing additional HRD regulations, they were appreciative of some of OPM's efforts. Generally speaking, agencies would like to see continued guidance from OPM in the area of HRD. Nevertheless, as seen in their objections to mandated supervisory training and the proposed regulations for conducting training needs assessments, agencies don't want OPM dictating HRD policy for them even when it is clear that agency HRD programs are lacking.

In this time of decentralization, OPM cannot be expected to direct agency HRD policies, even when it is obvious that change of some type is needed. Our view, and also one held by many agencies, is that OPM needs to provide guidance to assist agencies in the development of better HRD programs. Nowhere is this more important than in defining the proper role of HRD in the Federal Government and helping agencies improve the capacities of their HRD staffs. The identification by OPM, through its Interagency Advisory Group Committee on Development and Training, of roles and competencies of HRD specialists is a good start in this direction. But, as our research showed, most of the people working in HRD in the field were not performing many of the identified tasks. Where these tasks were performed, they were often accomplished in a perfunctory manner, with most of the HRD specialists' time being consumed by administrative duties. OPM needs to use its leadership position to encourage agencies to look at their HRD specialists in

new ways. Agencies need to include the HRD community in their strategic planning and in what should be the routine evaluation of program effectiveness. Agencies also need to be encouraged to refrain from using their HRD staffs for whatever job needs to be done at the moment. Where necessary, agencies should be encouraged to upgrade the quality of their HRD staffs either by training or moving people into positions that will capitalize on their strengths.

Based upon the results of our study, OPM needs to encourage many agencies to build greater capacity in their training staffs to meet the human resource challenges of the 1990's. In those agencies that need upgrading, the quality of HRD staffs may need to be elevated significantly if agency line management is to receive the type of assistance it needs to design and deliver effective training programs. OPM can certainly play a role in improving the capacity of agency HRD staffs by continuing to provide leadership to facilitate the professional development of HRD specialists. As was previously planned by OPM, this should include the development of model career pathways and a comprehensive developmental program for HRD specialists. OPM could also assist by providing model performance standards. In our view, HRD specialists should not be evaluated in terms of getting people into training, but in terms of determining the right training for the issues faced by their organizations.

OPM can also play a role by encouraging the people working in HRD to step up to these new roles and sell themselves in terms of the services they can provide. Many will have to be better grounded in the business of their organizations. Some may require training, and OPM should consider developing courses and other guidance to help with the transition to these new roles. In general, OPM should be available to serve as a consultant to organizations that want to develop better HRD programs.

In our view, OPM also has a role in championing training and development activities in the Government. OPM should be making the case to the administration, Congress, and agency heads that training is an investment in a better performing Government. Money that can be spent to improve the capabilities of the workforce can result in substantial long-term savings if the money is spent wisely. OPM needs to be making this case so that, in a time of severe budget constraints, organizations do not simply think of cutting their training expenditures. OPM should encourage agencies to think strategically and consider the long-range impact of their HRD decisions.

OPM should also continue to emphasize the importance of accurate assessments of training needs and encourage the development of formal assessment procedures that highlight both current organizational performance problems and future changes in mission objectives. As appropriate, OPM should continue to provide tools to assist in both the assessment of training needs and the evaluation of training effectiveness. OPM should be ready and able to provide technical assistance to organizations who wish to upgrade these capabilities.

Another area where HRD specialists and agencies believe that they could use assistance from OPM is in keeping up with the latest changes in technology and the dramatic effect these changes can have on the delivery of training. Agency personnel repeatedly told us that it is difficult for them to keep up with technological changes. As a way to fill this gap, several agencies recommended that OPM

establish a clearinghouse on Government training studies, research, and development. To be most helpful, this should include information concerning the potential uses of technological breakthroughs as well as the identification and cataloguing of current technologies (including both existing and emerging technologies). HRD specialists also said that it would be useful if OPM provided some sort of assistance on how to conquer the fear often associated with the use of new technologies. Others suggested that OPM could help by establishing partnerships with private industry that explore the potential of leading edge and emerging technologies while pointing out the feasibility and liabilities of each.

Some of our study participants also suggested that OPM assist the agencies by taking the lead in building new training platforms such as systems for satellite broadcasts of training. Others thought that OPM could help by developing and providing training for Governmentwide training mandates such as AIDS awareness training or the prevention of sexual harassment. Finally, a few agencies believed that OPM should be more of a spokesperson to Congress for all of the Government concerning the importance of viewing training as an investment.

Recommendations

1. Agencies and organizations throughout the Government need to make a commitment to evaluating their current performance in meeting mission objectives. This should include a greater emphasis on both strategic planning and continual and effective program evaluation. In the past, few organizations have devoted much effort to evaluating how well they are meeting their mission objectives. The Board hopes that the efforts of the National Performance Review will be instrumental in changing organizational perspectives on this issue. An even more important impetus may be provided by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

2. HRD staffs need to become integral participants in their organizations' strategic planning and program evaluation processes. In many organizations this will represent a fundamental change in the way they have been doing business. At the minimum, agencies may need to issue policy directives to encourage managers to include HRD offices as they attempt to evaluate and improve their operations. Policy directives alone, however, will probably not ensure that the change we are advocating will occur. For this reason, it is extremely important that the people working in HRD market their skills to managers. Rather than focusing on getting people into courses, HRD offices need to convince management that their first concern is the business of the organization and accomplishing mission objectives. For its part, OPM needs to use its position to encourage agencies to look at their HRD specialists in new ways.

3. Efforts should be made by agencies to ensure that HRD staffs have the skills needed to meet the demands of their new roles. Although the GPRA may provide a window of opportunity for the inclusion of HRD in the strategic management of Federal organizations, the people who work in HRD must be prepared to take advantage of this possibility. Accomplishing the objectives of GPRA may require significant amounts of training in program evaluation techniques and performance management. HRD specialists need to be included in this training.

4. OPM should use its position as the agency in charge of Human Resources Management for the entire Government to make a case for agencies placing greater emphasis on improving the quality of their HRD activities. This includes attempting to educate the administration, Congress, and agency heads to the fact that training can be an investment in a better performing Government. Rather than simply looking at training budgets as a place to save money, OPM should be making agencies aware that the funds spent on training can be a way of improving performance and solving organizational problems. Since HRD is only one piece of the Government's overall human management system, OPM should also be encouraging agencies to think strategically about the impact of all of their personnel management decisions. Acquiring, developing, motivating, sustaining, and streamlining the workforce must all be an integrated part of the management process.

5. OPM should continue to lead the effort to define the proper role for HRD specialists and facilitate their professional development. This should include the development of model career pathways, a comprehensive development program for HRD specialists, and training in the skills required to fill these new HRD roles. While OPM's identification of roles and competencies of HRD specialists was a good start in this direction, our research showed most of the people working in HRD in the field were not currently performing many of these tasks.

6. OPM should continue to emphasize the importance of accurate assessments of training needs and encourage the development of formal assessment procedures that highlight both current performance problems and future changes in mission objectives. As appropriate, OPM should continue to provide tools to assist in both the assessment of training needs and the evaluation of training effectiveness. OPM should also be prepared to provide technical assistance to organizations that wish to upgrade these capabilities.

Appendix

Script for Human Resources Development Telephone Interview

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board. I would like to speak to someone who is in charge of human resources development or training for your organization.

Hello, my name is _____ and I work for the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board. One of our functions is to conduct studies of the factors that affect the efficiency of the Federal workforce. In this capacity we're conducting a study of the human resources development function within the Federal Government. You've been randomly selected as a person who's familiar with the operation of the human resources development function in your particular organization. If you have a few minutes I'd like to ask you a few questions about the work you perform in human resources development. Would that be okay?

If you are busy at the moment and would prefer that I call back at another time, I'll be happy to do so.

If so, when should I call back?

Before asking any questions, I want to make sure that you understand that any information you provide is completely confidential. Your responses won't be linked to you personally and we're not attempting in any way to evaluate you or the job you are doing.

What we <u>are</u> attempting to do is look at the problems and challenges faced by human resource development professionals at this particularly critical time. What we need from you is your <u>honest</u> appraisal of the state of affairs within the human resources development community in the Federal Government.

1. Considering all of the activities associated with human resources development in your organization, on average, how many hours per day, week, month, or year do you <u>personally</u> devote to each of the following activities? (If you don't personally perform a given activity indicate "0" hours.)

A. Reviewing and approving training requests

B. Taking care of the logistics associated with the delivery of training (e.g., developing waiting lists or distributing confirmation letters and information to participants, etc.)

C. Identifying and developing solutions for problems in the area of human resources development

D. Validating instructional designs (to determine if they support accomplishment of desired competencies)

E. Personally serving as a trainer

F. Defending the organization's budget for training

G. Conducting performance analyses to determine sources of gaps between present and required performance (for employees in organizations supported by your office)

H. Discussing with top management the organization's strategic direction and its implications for human resources management (in terms of both short- and long-term plans)

I. Conducting occupational training needs assessment

J. Conducting individual training needs assessment

K. Conducting organizational training needs assessment

L. Conducting diagnostic and skills testing and performing skills assessment counseling

M. Identifying career development paths (for the primary occupations supported by your office)

N. Evaluating the effectiveness of training

2. If any of these tasks are not performed by the interviewee then ask whether any one else in his or her office performs this task.

3. If the task is performed by the interviewee or someone else in the office then the interviewee should be asked "to tell you as candidly as possible how well he or she believes the office performs each of the tasks." The response scale you should use is:

(1) Exceptionally well

(2) Quite well

(3) OK

(4) Not as well as we should

(5) Poorly

(6) Don't know

4. Does your office have a formal written human resources development program with measurable objectives to meet your organization's long-range objectives?

Yes No Don't know

5. When was this program last revised/updated?

6. I'd like you to tell me about the methods you may use to evaluate the training. I'm going to list some methods, and for each one tell me first whether your office uses the method, and if it does, what percentage of the courses provided by your office are evaluated by that method.

Do you use (answer "Yes", "No", or "Don't know"):

A. Course evaluations

B. Supervisory evaluations following the completion of training

C. Tests given at the completion of training

D. Followups with attendees after they return to their jobs

E. Performance improvement measures for attendees following the completion of training

What percent of the courses provided by your office use each of these methods of evaluation?

Please respond to the next several questions about your office using the following scale:

(1) Strongly agree

(2) Agree

(3) Neither agree nor disagree

(4) Disagree

(5) Strongly disagree

(6) Don't know

7. The budgets for training in the organizations we support are sufficient to meet their training and development needs.

8. Members of my human resources development office are expected to play a key role in the development of strategic plans to fulfill the mission requirements of the organizations supported by my office.

9. I am confident that the procedures we use to assess training needs give us a complete, up-to-date, and realistic picture of the current training needs of the employees working for this organization.

10. I am confident that the procedures we use to assess training needs give us a complete, up-to-date, and realistic picture of the future training needs of the employees working for this organization.

11. The procedures we use to assess the quality of training allow us to accurately judge the value of the training provided to the organizations we support.

12. Now a question using a different response scale. Taking into account inflation, in recent years how have the budgets for training and development in the organizations your office supports changed? Would you say budgets have:

(1) Increased significantly relative to inflation

(2) Increased slightly

(3) Remained about the same relative to inflation

(4) Decreased slightly

(5) Decreased significantly relative to inflation

(6) Don't know

13. Do you believe that it would be better if a fixed percentage of an agency's operating budget was set aside for employee development that could not be used for any other purposes?

Yes Maybe No Don't know

If you think this is a good idea, what percent of the budget do you believe is appropriate?

14. What do you believe are the most significant challenges or problems facing the human resources development community?

15. Could you briefly describe for me the procedures your offices uses to assess and prioritize the training needs of the organizations your office supports?

16. What is your job title?

17. What is your grade level?

18. Are you a supervisor?

19. How many years of experience do you have working in training or human resources development?

20. How many professionals in your office work in the area of training or human resources development?

21. How many professionals work in your personnel office?

22. Approximately how many people work in the organizations supported by your office?